NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

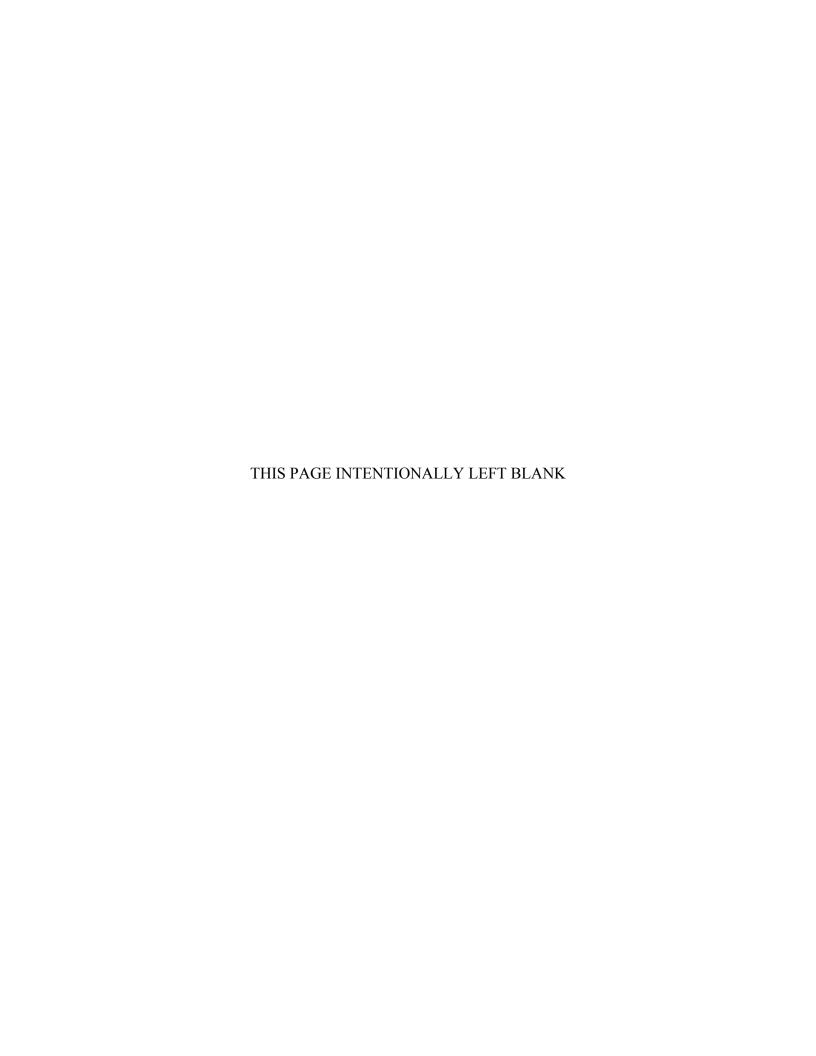**MORAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY: THE MIDSHIPMAN'S PERSPECTIVE**

by

Timothy M. Clark

September 2004

Thesis Co-Advisors:
Albert C. Pierce
Dana P. French, Jr.

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE September 2004	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Moral Development at the United States Naval Academy: The Midshipman's Perspective		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Clark, Timothy M.			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited	12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

This study examined midshipmen perceptions of moral development at the Naval Academy. Six focus groups comprising a total of 45 first-class midshipmen were conducted to discover aspects of the Naval Academy experience that have positive, neutral and negative impacts on midshipmen's moral development. Focus group midshipmen reported that good personal examples, open-forum discussions of ethical case studies, assuming midshipmen leadership responsibilities and participation in sports have a positive impact on their moral development. Parts of the Naval Academy experience that had a neutral impact on their moral development included some aspects of the core ethics course, the behavior of some of their peers, and the "directed development" approach they perceived in many of the Academy programs. Focus group midshipmen also believed that there were too many ethics and character programs, and that they were too repetitious and too routine to have more than a neutral impact on their moral development. Finally, focus group midshipmen cited bad example by some officers, the Bancroft Hall culture, and weaknesses in the Honor System as having a negative impact on their moral development. This study concluded with several recommendations from the midshipmen and researcher to improve moral development efforts at the Naval Academy.

14. SUBJECT TERMS Value Education, Teaching Methods, Military Values, Naval Academy	15. NUMBER OF PAGES 97
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

MORAL DEVELOPMENT AT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY: THE MIDSHIPMAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Timothy M. Clark
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1998

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
September 2004

Author:

Timothy M. Clark

Approved by:

Dr. Albert C. Pierce
Thesis Co-Advisor

Dana P. French, Jr.
Thesis Co-Advisor

Douglas A. Brooks, Ph.D.
Dean, Graduate School of Business and Public Policy

iii

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ABSTRACT

This study examined midshipmen perceptions of moral development at the Naval Academy. Six focus groups comprising a total of 45 first-class midshipmen were conducted to discover aspects of the Naval Academy experience that have positive, neutral and negative impacts on midshipmen's moral development. Focus group midshipmen reported that good personal examples, open-forum discussions of ethical case studies, assuming midshipmen leadership responsibilities and participation in sports have a positive impact on their moral development. Parts of the Naval Academy experience that had a neutral impact on their moral development included some aspects of the core ethics course, the behavior of some of their peers, and the "directed development" approach they perceived in many of the Academy programs. Focus group midshipmen also believed that there were too many ethics and character programs, and that they were too repetitious and too routine to have more than a neutral impact on their moral development. Finally, focus group midshipmen cited bad example by some officers, the Bancroft Hall culture, and weaknesses in the Honor System as having a negative impact on their moral development. This study concluded with several recommendations from the midshipmen and researcher to improve moral development efforts at the Naval Academy.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank my wife and daughter for all their support and patience during the writing of this thesis. Your love and support are the things that truly mean the most to me. I would also like to extend a special thanks to my advisors Dr. Albert Pierce and CAPT Dana French, Jr., USN (Ret.) for their tireless support, suggestions and motivation. You both gave me a great deal of your attention and knowledge, but most importantly, you gave me your most valuable commodity, time. I have learned a great deal from this experience and I believe you two have contributed to my development as a Naval Officer.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

I. MORAL DEVELOPMENT

A. BACKGROUND

The mission of the United States Naval Academy (USNA) is to develop midshipman morally, mentally and physically (United States Naval Academy, 2004). The moral aspect of this task involves teaching midshipmen to not only possess specific knowledge of several values like honor, integrity, and loyalty, but to also act according to these principles. During the fall semester of 2003, a semester-long series of roundtable discussions was conducted by the leaders of the Center for the Study or Professional Military Ethics. These discussions involved a wide range of Naval Academy faculty and staff. Using the input of the participants, a report was created with the stated purpose to "provide conceptual guidance to those who measure the 'ethics and character development' of midshipmen" (United States Naval Academy, 2003). This report also serves to illustrate the constant effort by Academy leaders to assess and change programs to produce officers of character.

B. PURPOSE

Academy officials spend a great deal of time and effort to search for the best ways to enable and promote moral development in midshipmen. This study began as an effort to discover why midshipmen responded to the institution's annual values survey in the manner in which they did. The survey asks midshipmen for their opinion on two aspects of moral development at the Naval Academy. Although midshipmen are not necessarily the best judges of their own moral development, they do have a valuable perspective that curriculum and program planners are not normally privy to. With an idea of what influences or types of influences the midshipmen feel have the greatest impact on them, planners might then employ this knowledge to adjust the emphases of its different programs and methods. Utilizing a clearer understanding of the midshipmen's perspective, policymakers might be more effective at devising, implementing and assessing the moral development of midshipmen. This study aims to report what works best, what works less well, and what does not work well at all from the midshipmen's perspective. It divides the responses of the values survey into three separate groups for analysis.

1

C.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on one primary and three secondary questions. The primary question asks how midshipmen perceive that the Naval Academy develops them morally. Understanding that much of a person's moral development occurs prior to any exposure to the Naval Academy, the scope of this thesis is necessarily limited to those influences or experiences that occur after enrollment. The secondary questions then become: 1) Which influences or experiences at USNA do midshipmen believe have the most positive impact on their moral development and why?, 2) Which influences or experiences at USNA do midshipmen believe have the least positive impact on their moral development and why?, and 3) Are there any influences or experiences at USNA that midshipmen believe have a negative impact on their moral development and why?

Given the qualitative nature of this research, terminology becomes important. The term *develop* is used to highlight the fact that midshipmen should improve in this area or their existing values should be positively reinforced during their years at the Naval Academy. The term *influence* is used to describe how different ways affect midshipmen's moral development both formally and informally. Although the Naval Academy has many tools to facilitate moral development, it is understood that moral development itself is accomplished within the individual midshipman. The Naval Academy can only hope to exert an influence that will inspire the midshipmen to advance along their own paths of moral development.

This study uses qualitative research methods and inductive analysis to identify and explore overarching themes. Two focus groups were conducted with Naval Academy first class midshipmen to compose a midshipman's definition of moral development and to discover common and recurrent themes. Once the themes were discovered, the emphasis became *why* these themes have the effects that they do. Then, four additional focus groups were conducted with Naval Academy first class midshipmen to more fully explore the common and recurrent themes. The constant comparison method of data analysis was used to develop themes that are supported with quotes from the focus groups. Midshipmen first class were used exclusively because they have been exposed to virtually all aspects of the moral development program at the Naval Academy.

Having participated in moral development programs throughout their years at USNA, first class midshipmen possess the most rounded and complete knowledge of Academy moral development programs.

Given the experience, knowledge and hard work that Academy officials bring to bear in the moral development of midshipmen, it is assumed that official programs have some positive impact on midshipmen. For this reason, the first two secondary questions address the positive impact of moral development influences on a continuous scale, from most positive to least positive. The term "negative" impact is used separately to discover any influences that midshipmen perceive detract from, or hinder their moral development. Although a protocol was drawn up consisting of seven questions, the focus groups were guided largely by midshipmen response and dialogue. While the protocol served to keep the discussion in line with the aims of the study, it was not used to limit midshipmen's ideas or comments. Ultimately then, this thesis seeks to find and explore the midshipmen's perspective on moral development.

D.   SCOPE, LIMITATIONS, AND ASSUMPTIONS

This thesis is not intended to critique or formally assess any moral development method at the Naval Academy. Instead, it seeks to offer valuable insight into the thoughts and feelings of the development target. Although many midshipmen thoughts, stories, and opinions are offered, they are not presented as the "right" answer to any problem. The study is limited solely to midshipmen *perceptions* about moral development. It is acknowledged that midshipmen themselves do not possess some key to moral development not available to faculty and staff personnel at the Naval Academy. While moral development occurs to some extent prior to arrival at USNA, only moral development that occurs after arrival and through participation in USNA programs is considered in this study.

For the purpose of this study two key assumptions are made. First, Naval Academy programs can, at best, only *influence* midshipmen to develop morally; they cannot *force* midshipmen to develop morally. In other words, moral development is internal to each midshipmen and not an automatic response to Naval Academy programs. USNA leadership must seek ways to inspire midshipmen to undertake their own development. Second, midshipmen are affected by efforts for moral development at the

Naval Academy. The myriad programs both inside and outside the classroom exert some influence along or away from the path of moral development. Some programs may be perceived to have a greater influence than others, and the potential exists that some programs may detract from moral development. Ultimately however, moral development is affected by many of the aspects of the total Naval Academy experience.

E.   ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

This study is organized into five chapters and an appendix. Chapter II contains historical and background information on the moral development aims of the Naval Academy. Particular emphasis is placed on the institution's stated moral development goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are considered in light of the Naval Academy's emphasis on and belief in moral development theory. In addition, the formal and informal influences on moral development are discussed in light of relevant literature.

Chapter III reviews the focus group protocol, data collection procedures, and data analysis methodology. Chapter IV presents the midshipmen's definition of moral development, along with common themes developed from the data analysis. These themes are supported by specific quotes gathered in the focus groups. Chapter V provides conclusions and recommendations for further research.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Although attendance at a service academy is not universal for generals and admirals, the academies set the standards of behavior for the whole military profession (Janowitz, 1971, p. 127).

A.   INTRODUCTION

In the sentence above, Morris Janowitz (1971) succinctly describes the importance of moral development efforts at the Naval Academy. Academy officials strive to teach the midshipmen the difference between right and wrong. While this is necessary and proper, the larger issue is one of behavior. Will the midshipmen act according to what they have been taught? James Rest has found that college students can memorize the classroom material necessary for examination purposes, without necessarily understanding or gaining the ability to apply the material in real-life moral situations (Rest in Boss, 1994, p. 185). For this reason, Academy officials must look beyond simple classroom measures of development.

Understanding this and in response to previous problems, Academy officials have adopted a comprehensive approach to developing midshipmen morally. By this administrators mean that ethics and moral development will be a part of every aspect of the Naval Academy experience. By design, academics, character development seminars, sports, religious services, and the striper organization in Bancroft Hall all contribute to the moral development of midshipmen. As researchers like William G. Perry Jr. have advocated, combining developmental stage theory and learning styles theories is an effective way to approach the teaching of morality and ethics (Perry, 1999). In this chapter, the researcher attempts to link the Naval Academy's moral development efforts with relevant literature.

B.   A BRIEF HISTORY OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT AT USNA

The origins of moral development at USNA go back almost to the school's founding in October of 1845. Originally founded to teach the sciences and math required of naval officers, the Naval Academy relied solely on the admissions process to select men of character. In fact, Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft made moral character a

requirement for admission by asserting "They must be of good moral character, and pass a satisfactory examination before the Academic Board in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and English grammar" (United States Naval Academy, 1845).

Within five years of its founding, the Naval Academy had added courses in "moral science," including an ethics course. Midshipmen however, did not see the ethics course as a practical and necessary use of their time. In fact, on November 20, 1852, twenty-two midshipmen signed a letter to the academic board condemning the course and asking the board to substitute a more practical course (United States Naval Academy, 1852). It was already clear that the midshipmen had keen perceptions about the utility of their studies and desired to have an impact on their own development.

As time passed, the curriculum was altered to suit the needs of the service. At times moral development was completely removed from the curriculum to provide for more specialized training required by a rapidly modernizing fleet. At other times, particularly in light of the more recent scandals, moral education and development became more prominent. In 1951, midshipmen William Lawrence and H. Ross Perot were instrumental in formalizing the honor concept of midshipmen. Run almost completely by midshipmen, the current honor concept is still very much like the original concept formalized over fifty years ago. This effort is another testament to the midshipmen's desire to be a part of their moral development.

Considered by Academy officials to be one of the cornerstones of moral development in midshipmen, attendance at church services on Sundays had been mandatory since the founding of the school. A class action suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of a group of midshipmen in 1970 brought this ninety-seven year requirement to an end (Gelfand, 2002, p. 202). The Academy's Board of Visitors recognized this problem and assembled an ad hoc committee to design a new ethics course as part of the mandatory curriculum (United States Naval Academy, 1973, p. 14). The committee did design the course, but it was not made a mandatory part of the curriculum. Instead it was an academic elective, or more informally taught by officers around the yard.

The scandals of the late 1980's and early 1990's would exert the latest great influence on midshipmen moral development. With the electrical engineering cheating scandal of 1993, the situation had truly become a moral crisis. Whereas previous problems had produced only minor changes to the existing curriculum and programs, the electrical engineering cheating scandal forced Academy officials to undertake major change. These changes are largely still in place today and represent a new approach to moral education at Annapolis.

A committee was formed by then Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton to review the cheating scandal, and the honor concept in general. The so-called Armitage committee, named for its chairman Ambassador Richard Armitage, produced a report detailing nine recommendations for improvement. The Academy responded by creating the Character Development Division and emphasizing the "ethics across the curriculum" approach that has driven moral development at the Naval Academy. The major changes were complete when the Secretary of the Navy authorized the creation of The Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics in 1998 to address issues of ethical importance both within and beyond the confines of the Naval Academy (United States Naval Academy, 2004).

C. THEORIES OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Piaget and Kohlberg

A review of modern moral development methods must begin with Jean Piaget. His work with 5 to 13 year old children ultimately found that morality develops over time. By this he meant that moral understanding occurred in a series of stages in children (Piaget in Lickona, 1980, p. 104). This finding implied that there were things that could be done to influence this development. He conceived of three overlapping stages of development that could be differentiated by their focus.

His first stage was dominated by authority. Here children behaved according to the rules outlined by authority. In the second stage a child was more focused on the feelings or reactions of society or peers. His final stage focused on feelings and thoughts internal to the child. The first stage involved the least developed moral sense, in the sense that it relied on necessary rules and authority. In fact, Piaget believed that his

moral development stages evolved independently of any drive for rule enforcement and moral training typically employed by parents (1977, p. 190).

Advancing Piaget's theories, Lawrence Kohlberg would become one of the most important modern moral development theorists. Relying on clinical interviews at three year intervals over the lives of his subjects, Kohlberg attempted to prove his theories on moral development. Kohlberg took Piaget's three levels of development and turned them into six moral stages grouped "in terms of (1) what is right, (2) the reason for upholding the right, and (3) the social perspective behind each stage" (1984, p. xxvii). Previously, the schools of behaviorism and socialization had contended that it was not the individual, but society that dictated the standards of morality (Rest, 1994, p. 2).

Kohlberg's six stages were divided into three levels: the preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. Like Piaget, his levels were differentiated by their levels of emphasis on rules, society, and internal feelings but Kohlberg's theories were driven by a person's view of the concept of justice. His preconventional level was experienced until about age nine and was characterized by an effort to avoid punishment or to serve the child's own interests. The conventional level followed into young adulthood and was characterized by conscience, and social harmony. Finally, the postconventional level was characterized by a perceived obligation to uphold universal principles and commitments.

Within his three levels were six stages. Thomas Lickona describes stage 1 as "an eye for and eye and a tooth for a tooth" mentality towards justice. Stage 2 is closer to "lets make a deal." Stage 3 begins level 2 and is characterized by justice in terms of the Golden Rule. Stage 4 brings an understanding of social responsibilities including a just distribution of rights, duties, responsibility and law. To Kohlberg, more than 80% of the general public never moves beyond stage 4.

Kohlberg's stage 5 brings about the realization that morality supercedes man-made law. It recognizes the law's responsibility to protect the rights of individuals. In essence, stage 5 is characterized by the knowledge that the laws themselves are based on moral principles. Stage 6 is displayed in a person who can understand and explain universal ethical principles underlying human rights. Through his longitudinal

experiments, Kohlberg never observed an individual who had progressed to stage 6 (Lickona in Callahan & Bok, 1980. pp. 105-106). In fact, Kohlberg believed that only a minority of adults will ever reach the postconventional level of understanding (1984, pp. 172-177).

2. Rest and Narvaez

James Rest and Darcia Narvaez later conceived of a model that links the cognitive aspects of moral development with behavior. Their theory, known as integrative theory, is described as "a tradition whose strength lies in a willingness to draw on what has proved to be useful and effective in diverse traditions, models, approaches, and perspectives" (Kurtines & Gewirtz, 1995, p. 377). Their four-component model focuses on "internal processes necessary to produce a moral act" (Rest & Narvaez in Kurtines & Gewirtz, 1995, p. 386). This model contends that cognition, interpretation, and behavior are inextricably linked with each part contributing to the success or failure of a moral endeavor.

The first component is moral sensitivity and involves a cognitive recognition of the moral aspect a decision. The second component is moral judgment and involves recognition and a conscious deliberation of moral alternatives. The alternatives are weighed with an eye toward the impact of actions on others. Component three is moral motivation and is characterized by an internal search for importance when forced to make a decision as opposed to any outside influences. The final component is moral character and is described by the use of the first three components and the personal strength and conviction required to act in a morally proper way (Rest, 1994, pp. 22-25).

The baseline knowledge reinforced by Rest and Narvaez is two-fold. First, morality can be defined in terms of progression. This progression may be along Kohlberg's staircase metaphor (Rest, 1994) where a person progresses only up the ladder of moral development. It could also occur as in Rest's model where a person moves throughout his or her own personal four components making individual decisions on all moral levels for each particular moral test. Second, the important part of the decision-making process is the action or behavior that occurs as a result of the moral development. As Daniel Callahan puts it, "The whole and final point of ethics is that of the guidance of

conduct . . . . Ethics calls on us to act in the light of what we perceive to be right and good."(In Lickona, 1980, p. 131).

D.   MORAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGE SETTINGS

Many studies have shown that moral education is closely tied with Piaget's and later Kohlberg's stage theories (Shaver, 1985; Shaver, 1987; Burwell et al., 1992; King & Kitchener, 1994). These studies relied upon the Defining Issues Test (DIT) to investigate the moral development in undergraduate college students. The DIT seeks to measure a person's preference for moral reasoning. Its results place a person into one of Kohlberg's categories of moral development (Rest, Thoma & Edwards, 1997).

Rest & Thoma (1985) used longitudinal data to determine the relationship between moral judgment development and formal education. They tracked the moral judgment development of participants from the end of high school to 6 years beyond high school. The participants were grouped into two groups: low education (less than two years of college) and high education (more than two years of college). They reported increases in scores two years after high school for both groups. Four years later, they found that the sample size of 23 students with two or more years in college were exhibiting continual gains in score, while the 13 with less than two years of college were not. Their findings show that participation in higher education increases moral judgment development.

1.   Academic Instruction

The DIT has been used extensively to investigate the effects of educational experiences specifically designed to promote the development of moral reasoning among college students. Mustapha & Seybert (1990) studied the effect of student participation in general education courses on moral reasoning skills. Boss (1994) studied the effect of participation in an ethics course. Both approaches were found to increase moral judgment scores.

Boss' study used two sections of an ethics class. She found that the ethics curriculum and discussion of moral dilemmas for moral development was effective only for the ethics section whose members were also required to complete 20 hours of community service work in addition to being required to keep a journal of their experiences. The group practicing community service demonstrated an increase in moral

judgment scores, while the section not involved in community service maintained stable test scores (1994). This implies that moral judgment development is facilitated by direct involvement and service. Another way of looking at these results is to consider that performing moral actions in conjunction with classroom instruction tends to increase moral development as measured by the DIT.

Outside of using the DIT for assessment, other scholars have advocated the mix of classroom instruction and student interaction to facilitate moral development. John Dewey (1938) was a proponent of this interaction in the classroom. His work *Experience and Education* contends that experience is what a student takes away from an educational event. The value of an experience is measured by the continuity and the interaction achieved. Dewey would devote his life to measuring and proving the utility of his views on the role of experience in education.

His principle of continuity is described by how much an earlier lesson can be applied to a later lesson. Dewey describes this phenomenon as "the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow" (1938, p. 42). Interaction among students at different levels of experience and knowledge then facilitates growth and development by all involved in the group. For this reason educators are charged with creating the educational environment necessary to combine and require students to engage in continuity and interaction. Together, the two principles facilitate the collection of experiences, which can be the prime mover in moral development in classrooms. Experience then becomes the immediate goal that will ensure that the ultimate goal of moral development is accomplished.

2. Non-Academic

Thomas Lickona states:

> Ethics done only in the safety of the classroom, never put to the test of real decision making, may fail to develop the moral will, the commitment to the right, that is the necessary bridge between thought and action (1980, p. 130).

He and other researchers have found that moral development can just as easily occur outside of formal classroom instruction. Rest (1979) has reported the responses of

students in his study when asked to identify experiences they thought had influenced their moral thinking. Although a wide range of experiences were cited, one recurrent response was time spent contemplating the issues. This response implies that his students valued reflection after instruction (Rest, 1979).

Georg Lind has also offered his perspective on moral development that occurs outside the classroom. Like Dewey and Rest he believes that introspection is a key part of moral development. He uses the term "guided reflection" to describe the mix of qualified guidance with the students' own introspection. Lind believes that guided reflection combined with role-taking is the pathway for moral autonomy and self-sustaining moral development that can occur regardless of the educational environment. When this moral autonomy is achieved, the student will no longer avoid morally challenging situations, but will be developed by them (Lind in Ryan, 1999, p. 82).

Others believe that the major impetus for moral development is a person's own attempts to solve problems when required by challenging situations in the environment (Lickona, 1980, p. 110). Lickona specifically notes that one of the stimuli for this development is having the responsibility to actually make real-life moral decisions for the group. The leadership positions filled by senior midshipmen place them in just such a role. Real-life situations in organizations like the honor system force those involved to engage in moral reasoning and, according to Lickona and others, therefore promotes their moral development.

Researchers from Piaget (1977) to Kohlberg (1984) to Boss (1994) have all found a link between the cognitive and social aspects of moral development. They have found that the greatest development gains take place through cognitive and social disequilibrium (Boss in Ryan, p. 89). Gains may be immediate, or may take a lifetime to achieve, but they seem to come when participants interact with peers, and attempt to place themselves in the positions of others. This social element of moral development often this leads a student to confront his or her own moral vulnerabilities. Instances like these can be created in classrooms and extra curricular peer seminars designed for just

this purpose. The Naval Academy's Character Development Seminars are an example of this type of moral development tool, but are by no means the only tools available for this purpose.

E. INFORMAL INFLUENCES ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Sports Teams and Extra Curricular Activities

Sports teams and extra curricular groups can also influence moral development. Norma Haan (1983) has completed research that suggests that moral development is influenced by peoples' moral interaction with each other in concrete situations. These concrete situations are often found on sports fields and in group interaction directed towards common goals. Shying away from abstract reasoning about hypothetical moral dilemmas, Haan believes in structured observation of actual moral dialogues. Other researchers have advocated Haan's approach to moral development in sports-related contexts (Jones & McNamee, 2000, p. 134).

The effects of participation in sports and extra curricular activities have received conflicting reports. Some researchers have found that a tendency to fixate on winning exists in some sports. This fixation, in many instances, can lead to immoral behavior in the pursuit of "victory at all costs" including illegal drug use, unfair play, and poor sportsmanship (Bergmann Drewe, 2000). Other researchers have found that sports participants learn self-control, fair play, honor, and consideration of others (Hopton in Harvey, 2003). Other scholars have also argued that moral development in sports is achieved by observing the words and actions of good exemplars (Jones & McNamee, 2000, p. 142).

Extra curricular activities come in many forms. Some espouse community service and therefore are presumed to influence moral development according to studies mentioned earlier (Boss, 1994). Others focus on the particular interests of its participants but avoid any formal ties to moral development. Clearly, as in sports teams, the observation of good exemplars, or mentoring, influences moral development to some extent. Jacobi (1991) defines mentorship as a relationship where the mentor serves as a guide, role model, teacher, and counselor. Using this definition, scholars have reported that mentorship in extracurricular activities can have a positive effect on moral development in participants (Jacobi, 1991; Kram, 1985).

2.   Religious Activities

Another form of extra curricular activity is participation in religious activities. These activities include attendance at religious services for worship, participation in religious club activities, or private consultations with religious personnel. While some have argued that, in general, ethical principles are based on religious principles, research has found that people engaged in religious activities do not have a greater chance of displaying ethical behavior. In 1978, original research conducted by J.S. Leming (in Bruggeman & Hart, 1996, p. 340) employed the DIT and found a negative correlation between level of moral recognition and a student's propensity to cheat. In fact, he also found that even students with higher levels of principled moral reasoning were likely to cheat on situations involving little supervision or little threat of punishment if caught. Other researchers would later test students in religious schools to explore the theory that students of religious schools display higher levels of moral behavior.

Bruggeman and Hart (1996) attempted to replicate Leming's research by testing 220 Catholic school students. Their question was whether the religious aspect of the Catholic schooling would produce higher moral values and therefore more moral behavior. After administering the DIT to the group, they were all asked to participate in a memory test. As an incentive to cheat, they were told that their performance would affect their semester grades. After viewing a piece of paper, the test group was only required to cover their eyes while the control group was blindfolded and asked to recall the locations of circles on the previously viewed piece of paper. Scores above a certain threshold were considered to be a result of cheating. In addition, as another measure, after the test each student was anonymously surveyed to ask whether they had cheated. The researchers found the overall cheating rate to be over 70%. In addition, they found neither a higher score on the DIT compared to public school test scores nor any lower levels of cheating or lying for the Catholic school students.

3.   Organizational Culture

Students certainly arrive at college with a diverse range of characteristics and values. Tinto (1975) has asserted that university student development is influenced by student interaction and the institution's structures. In other words, the underlying culture of the organization plays a role in the student's development. Tinto believes that certain

actions are rewarded and therefore tend to integrate that student into the pervasive culture. At the same time, other behaviors are punished and impede integration. Regardless of the institutional aims, the underlying culture is always present and works to inculcate its members with its normative values and attitudes.

Scholars have contended that this energy can be harnessed and used to further the institution's aims. William Kurtines and Jacob Gewirtz conducted a study of the moral culture in three high schools (1995). The study compared alternatively run schools which espoused moral training with other more mainstream schools which did not specifically espouse morality. Using the moral judgment interview (MJI) they found that the lack of a moral culture in the mainstream schools actually seemed to hinder the moral development of their students or kept them in Kohlberg's preconventional to early conventional thinking throughout their high school tenure. In addition, the researchers found a link between the moral culture of the group and the moral reasoning of the individual members of the group. Finally, the researchers reported:

> . . . Responsibility for others and a shared sense of being tied together in a common group seem to promote not only individual moral reasoning development but also a strong and high-stage moral culture. These results indicate that students expect themselves and others to behave in ways consistent with their best ideas about what is moral when they are in groups they value which have publically shared prosocial norms. We see a positive moral culture as being a boost to moral behavior . . . .(Kurtines & Gewirtz, 1995, p. 76).

Ultimately then organizational culture can be good news or bad news. Scholars contend that students learn from the "hidden curriculum" (Rosen in Callahan & Bok, 1980; Kurtines & Gewirtz, 1995). Rosen goes so far as to say that moral lessons conveyed outside the classroom through family, friends, TV, or church dilutes the influence of classroom instruction for the purpose of moral development (1980). Clearly then, an organization's culture should be managed to complement its stated aims of moral education and development.

F.   MORAL DEVELOPMENT AIMS OF USNA

During the fall semester of 2003, a semester-long series of roundtable discussions was conducted by the leaders of the ethics and character development departments. These discussions involved a wide range of Naval Academy faculty and staff. Using the

input of the participants, a report was created with the stated purpose to "provide conceptual guidance to those who measure the 'ethics and character development' of midshipmen" (Pierce, 2003). This report is entitled "Ethics and Character Development Assessment Process" and delivers a conceptual overview of the ethics and character development aims of USNA. The document specifically maps out the Naval Academy's approach to moral development and resembles Rest and Narvaez's four component model described earlier. An explanation of the essential elements of this approach follows with a discussion of relevant literature.

1.   Moral Awareness

The first tenet to the Naval Academy's philosophy of moral development is moral awareness. Moral awareness at the Naval Academy involves the recognition of the moral content of a given problem. According to Daniel Callahan and others, this recognition is a key first step (Callahan, 1980; Rest, 1979; Rest & Thoma, 1985). Callahan contends that as students become more and more aware of moral issues, they begin to see the world as an unavoidable web of moral relationships. The issues cannot be dealt with or learned from however unless they are recognized.

Another part of moral awareness according to the Naval Academy is the recognition of and acceptance of moral obligation. This idea entails the willingness on the part of students to accept the fact that moral issues require internal consideration. Consideration then fuels internal development through self-reflection and self-criticism in response to the moral dilemmas. Callahan believes the core of this obligation to be the "centrality of freedom and personal responsibility" (Callahan, 1980, p. 65). In other words, moral awareness is recognizing a moral situation and then accepting the responsibility to consider the moral aspects of the situation. Moral awareness resides completely within the person.

2.   Moral Reasoning

Moral reasoning is the second tenet to the Naval Academy's philosophy of moral development. At the Naval Academy moral reasoning is the ability to determine and articulate the aspects of an issue that distinguish the best solutions from lesser alternatives. This requires knowledge of moral principles as well as the possession and use of critical thinking and logic skills in a process internal to the student to arrive at

moral decisions. The Naval Academy aims to teach students that the moral aspect of decisions requires consideration beyond the simple decision based on the least negative consequences. More importantly, the moral decision making process should include consideration of a person's core values and respect for human worth (United States Naval Academy, 2003).

Educators at the Naval Academy and other colleges have devoted considerable time and effort to develop programs that facilitate the development of moral reasoning through educational experiences. Research has shown that three elements are essential to advance a young adult's level of moral reasoning. First, the students must be confronted with situations that involve moral conflict. Second, the students must be actively involved in discussions with peers on moral dilemmas in an environment conducive to debate. Finally, these educational problems must be longer than just a few weeks (Lawrence, 1980; Schlaefli et al., 1985). Other researchers have revisited these findings and successfully demonstrated their validity empirically (Mustapha & Seybert, 1990, p. 33).

The literature on moral reasoning is plentiful. Many scholars seek to define and study it (Rest, 1979; Mustapha & Seybert, 1990; Boss, 1994). Many others attempt to measure it. The most common way of measuring moral reasoning has become the already referred to DIT. Researchers have consistently used the DIT to measure moral reasoning ability (Lawrence, 1980, pp. 178-191; Schlaefli, Rest, & Thoma, 1985, pp. 319-352). Though debate rages over the effectiveness of the DIT, it continues to be the cornerstone of much of the quantitative research on moral development.

3.   Moral Courage

The third tenet to the Naval Academy's philosophy of moral development is moral courage. Moral courage at the Naval Academy is having the will to follow through with and enforce the decisions made within the person. Regardless of any perceived outside threat or detractor from the "right" alternative, the morally courageous person must have the will to behave in a moral manner. Studies have shown that there is often some degree of difficulty or internal struggle associated with mustering the will to carry

out the "right" actions associated with moral decisions. Ultimately however, moral courage does not in and of itself require moral behavior, only the will to follow the morally reasonable alternative.

Moral courage must be strengthened enough to overcome any obstacle the person may encounter. These obstacles include self interest, peer interest, and institutional interest. Sissela Bok relates these points in her discussion of whistleblowing (Bok in Callahan & Bok, 1980, p. 294). Though these interests are important to all involved, the aim is to educate students to exercise a sort of internal prioritization. Regardless of the situation, the student must be ready to consider the situation, accept the moral obligation and then be willing to choose the right path. Studies and surveys at the Naval Academy have consistently revealed that midshipmen feel that peer pressure is one of the most common reasons for a lack of moral courage. Moral education seeks to instill the courage to make morally sound decisions, while maintaining the high level of classmate loyalty learned upon arrival at the Naval Academy (United States Naval Academy, 2003).

4.   Moral Effectiveness

The fourth tenet to the Naval Academy's philosophy of moral development is moral effectiveness. This tenet brings together all of the first three. After realizing that a moral issue is involved, reasoning through the right and wrong options available, and then mustering the courage to act accordingly, a student must then successfully complete the action decided right for the given situation. All the education and development culminate in the action taken. In this sense, the student's moral effectiveness can also be seen as a measure of the institution's morality development effectiveness.

Research has proven that there is no guarantee that moral awareness combined with sound moral reasoning will produce moral actions consistently. Thomas Lickona also reminds not to "assume that because people use high-level thinking about hypothetical moral problems, they will use high-level thinking to solve real-life problems in their personal experience" (Lickona in Callahan & Bok, 1980, p. 115). He refers to a J.S. Leming study where 8th and 12th grade students were asked to judge classical moral dilemmas. The students were later asked to judge a more personally relevant moral dilemma, such as whether or not to lie to their parents in order to attend a party they were specifically forbidden to attend. Whereas the first test resulted in higher scores for the

12th graders indicating an advanced moral development, the second test resulted in lower and relatively equal grades for both 8th and 12th graders.

Scholars have argued, however, that courses or experiences do not necessarily have to produce moral behavior in students. Instead, they should aim to *set the stage* for behavioral change (Callahan, 1980). Although the Naval Academy does provide the 24-hour controlled environment believed required to effect a classical behavioral change, this change is not necessarily required, nor desired by officials. First of all, the vast majority of midshipmen already behaves morally and therefore requires no change. Secondly, the Academy does not desire a change due to *enforcement* alone since its graduates will be expected to be self-sufficient leaders in the fleet. Instead it strives to create the impetus for personal change within the midshipmen.

The Naval Academy acknowledges the notion popular with scholars that moral development continues throughout a person's life (United States Naval Academy, 2003). Similar to Kohlberg's staircase analogy, a person progresses with experience and maturity. The Naval Academy graduate is not expected to leave Annapolis with a fully and completely developed sense of morality. Instead, the school aims to put a graduate on the path to sustained self-motivated moral development. Though this path may be different for each graduate, the ethics across the curriculum concept seeks to help each midshipmen find his or her own path.

G.   CHAPTER SUMMARY

The literature makes clear that moral development is a goal that can be achieved in many different ways. With a myriad of programs and tools, the Naval Academy continues its attempts to inspire the moral development of its students. As stated by the Conceptual Paper, "because no one program can do it all, it is the *mix* that matters . . ." (United States Naval Academy, 2003). Although there is no guarantee that participation in an educational program will yield the desired or expected results, the importance of the outcomes necessitates the efforts. Clearly today's naval service requires officers of character.

This chapter has reviewed the literature on moral development and educational theory. Specific aspects of the Naval Academy experience were linked to research in

moral development. No literature was found that focused on the student's perceptions or preferences in this regard. With this review as its backbone, this study now attempts to shift its focus to the students. The next chapter outlines the researcher's methodology and other particulars of the research.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A.   INTRODUCTION

The Naval Academy's comprehensive approach to moral education has to compete with other pressures and influences in a midshipman's life. In addition to moral education, the rigors of academic excellence and competition for limited billets and resources pressure midshipman to focus their energies on several other tasks. Some of these other tasks could be considered detractors from moral development. With this in mind, Academy officials strive to create the best environment across the Naval Academy experience to maximize moral development.

B.   THE VALUE SURVEY QUESTIONS

As stated earlier, the Naval Academy acknowledges the widely held belief that true moral development occurs within the individual person. As testament to the value the administration places on the hearts and minds of the midshipmen, the Naval Academy administers a comprehensive "values survey" each year to all but its freshman or fourth class. This survey includes a wide range of questions outside the scope of this research, but also includes a few questions that actually inspired this research. This research began as an effort to answer why two questions were answered as they were.

Table 1.   Results of Question 128 on Midshipmen Values Survey

128. To what extent would you say the Naval Academy is having an impact on your moral/ethical awareness/ability to distinguish right from wrong?

Impact	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Positive	488	17.3	17.3	17.3
Positive	1150	40.8	40.8	58.1
Neutral	1012	35.9	35.9	94.1
Negative	131	4.7	4.7	98.7
Very Negative	36	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	2817	100.0	100.0	

As Table 1 illustrates, 58.1% of all upperclass midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy has a very positive or positive impact on the institution's second step of moral

development or moral reasoning. This result may seem reasonable speculating that some midshipmen did not take the time to read and appropriately respond to the survey. Regardless, 35.9% of the respondents chose the neutral answer. They believe, in effect, that the Naval Academy's moral development efforts neither help nor hinder their moral development. On the other hand, despite the efforts of Academy officials to integrate moral development into every aspect of the midshipmen's experience, 6% of all surveyed midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy has a negative or very negative impact on their personal moral development. This data alone could be nothing more than an anomaly, but other questions solidified the researcher's concern.

Table 2.   Results of Question 129 on Midshipmen Values Survey

129. To what extent would you say the Naval Academy is having an impact on your moral behavior (doing right)?

Impact	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very Positive	501	17.8	17.8	17.8
Positive	1172	41.6	41.6	59.4
Neutral	979	34.8	34.8	94.1
Negative	131	4.7	4.7	98.8
Very Negative	34	1.2	1.2	100.0
Total	2817	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 addresses the final stage of the Naval Academy's moral development aims or moral effectiveness. The behavioral aspect of morality is the primary outcome in this area. The results of this question are almost identical to question 128. When considering moral behavior, 59.4% of upperclass midshipmen believe that the Academy is having a very positive or positive impact on them. Similar to the moral awareness question result, 34.8% of the surveyed midshipmen believe that the Academy is having no real effect on their moral development. And finally, 5.9% believe the Academy's efforts are having a negative or very negative impact on their moral development.

After considering both questions 128 and 129, the researcher concluded that further study was warranted. The similarity of the results on questions that emphasize various aspects of the Academy's moral development aims raise questions about the

midshipmen's perspective. As required by the school's mission to morally develop midshipmen, officials spend a great deal of time and effort to create and maintain a comprehensive approach. Why then do large percentages of midshipmen see the Academy's efforts as having a neutral, negative, or very negative impact for both areas? This research attempts to answer this question, as well as why large percentages of midshipmen see the Academy's efforts as successful.

C.   DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The researcher obtained feedback from a total of six focus groups including 45 first class midshipmen. First-class midshipmen were used exclusively because at the time of the focus groups, second semester of their senior year, they have experienced or participated in all or most of the Academy's programs for moral development. Their relative maturity and nearing-graduation perspective were important in insuring candid, earnest reflection and response. The first two groups were relatively small and initially searched for a usable midshipmen definition of moral development. The participants for these initial focus groups were selected at random by the Naval Academy's Institutional Research department. After selection, the researcher contacted the midshipmen via electronic mail with a brief description of the research and requested their presence on a specified evening.

After obtaining the midshipmen's definition of moral development in these initial focus groups, the remaining time was used to search for and explore common themes about the most and least effective moral development techniques. After the initial focus groups were completed, four additional groups were conducted. These groups were not asked for their definition of moral development, but instead focused on the effects of current Naval Academy moral development methods and programs. The subsequent focus groups sought to pinpoint why certain moral development methods employed by the Naval Academy were considered to have a positive effect while others were considered neutral and still others were considered to have a negative effect on moral development.

The subsequent groups consisted of first-class midshipmen during their respective Junior Officer Practicum classes. This forum was chosen due to its randomness and convenience. The forum is viewed as random because the midshipmen were placed in

their respective classes randomly by the registration process. In addition, this forum is viewed as convenient because the midshipmen participated during a time that would normally be spent in class and therefore did not conflict with their sports, study, or personal time. After conducting the initial focus groups during the evening, the researcher believed that more and higher quality data would be obtained if the focus groups were conducted at a more convenient time for the midshipmen.

D. FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

The focus groups were conducted with a general set of target questions composed by the researcher. The Appendix provides the general protocol used. The protocol was designed to be open-ended in nature, to allow the midshipmen to answer and shift the discussion in the directions they believed to be most germane. In addition to the basic protocol, the researcher asked probing questions to clarify the group's responses and keep the discussion focused on moral development. Throughout the process, the information obtained from earlier groups was incorporated into discussions with subsequent groups. This tactic was taken to continually improve the focus group protocol and data collection process. For this reason, the protocol contained in the Appendix represents only the general target questions.

With many topics, the culture of the Naval Academy creates a degree of skepticism in midshipmen regarding open discussion with members of the officer corps. For this reason, the researcher was careful to stress that no punitive measures would result from the discussions in the focus groups. In addition, the group members were assured that only anonymous quotations would be reported in this thesis. To assuage any lingering fears or skepticism, the midshipmen were engaged in casual conversation for the first five to ten minutes of each focus group.

E. DATA ANALYSIS

The focus groups were recorded on audio cassettes and then transcribed verbatim to facilitate analysis. These transcriptions were then imported into the QSR NVivo software program for analysis. First, a midshipmen definition or moral development was synthesized from the data and reported. Quotations were included to support this definition. With the midshipmen's definition of moral development as a starting point, the research shifted to analyzing the responses to the other general questions.

The researcher began with three general subtopics from the values survey: 1) reasons for positive impacts, 2) reasons for neutral impacts, and 3) reasons for negative impacts. General themes were then developed within each subtopic and assessed as they related to the research irrespective of the specific question that prompted the response. Within each theme, specific quotes from midshipmen were reported for support. Although the goal was to identify and report common beliefs and perspectives, individual or unique comments were not rejected. Each subtopic and theme is presented and discussed in Chapter IV.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to offer valuable insight into the thoughts and feelings of *midshipmen*. Focus group midshipmen were asked for their opinions on why certain moral development methods employed by the Naval Academy were considered to have a positive effect, while others were considered neutral, and still others were considered to have a negative effect on moral development. The opinions presented in this chapter were given in response to the questions listed in the appendix. Although many midshipmen's thoughts, stories, and opinions are offered, they are not presented as the "right" answer to any problem perceived by the researcher. The study is limited solely to midshipmen's *perceptions* about moral development; it does not address any particular method of development unless the midshipmen specifically mentioned it. The reader should also be aware that the words "midshipmen," or "many midshipmen," or "some midshipmen" when used in this chapter refer only to those midshipmen who participated in the focus groups; the focus group methodology does not permit extrapolation to the brigade as a whole.

This chapter attempts to discover why the midshipmen responded as they did to the two Values Survey questions reported in Chapter III. The two questions are: 1) To what extent would you day the Naval Academy is having an impact on your moral/ethical awareness/ability to distinguish right from wrong, and 2) To what extent would you say the Naval Academy is having an impact on your moral behavior (doing right). The three main sections of this chapter discuss, respectively, why midshipmen believe certain aspects of the USNA experience had positive impacts, neutral impacts, and negative impacts on their moral development. Within these sections, common themes from the focus groups are listed, explained, and illustrated with midshipman quotes.

B. FACTORS FOR A POSITIVE IMPACT ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT

For this research, small groups of midshipmen were asked why they believe the Naval Academy has an overall positive impact on their moral development. These focus group midshipmen noted four distinct aspects of the Naval Academy experience. The aspects include: 1) good examples they see from superiors, 2) open-forum discussions, 3)

the responsibility thrust upon them, and 4) participation in sports. The following sections use the midshipmen's words to describe why these aspects contribute to the positive impact these midshipmen believe the Naval Academy is having on their moral development.

1.   **Aspect 1: Good Examples**

There are several reasons that midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy has a positive impact on their moral development. Aside from being a mission of the Naval Academy, the midshipmen believe that several specific things help them develop morally. The first consists of the good examples many midshipmen see in the officer corps and faculty at USNA. One midshipman said:

> I'd say one of the biggest influences has been the examples that we see from officers who are teachers or company officers… Noticing that… LT so-in-so is a great father and a great company officer and cares about us and things like that. That probably influences me more that anything else really. I learn a lot by just wanting to be like someone.

For many midshipmen, seeing morally sound behavior in their seniors inspires morally sound behavior in them. Morally sound decisions and actions create a desire in many midshipmen to emulate the examples they see.

Most midshipmen especially appreciate and aspire to be like superiors who set a proper example and reinforce it. This reinforcement works best when it involves an explanation for why a certain decision is morally sound. These explanations seem to set the best examples apart from others. Another midshipman commented:

> I think our Battalion Officer has been a good influence on morality. He sets an example and if you're not quite on the same track he is, he'll explain to you why it's the right reason and show you how to do it as opposed to just telling you what to do and expecting you to do something without showing you how to do it.

Midshipmen then value the explanation of superior's thought processes and some effort to show them how to behave morally. Alternatively, they do not value simply being told what to do. Good examples, coupled with the understanding of why decisions and actions are morally sound, reinforce proper moral behavior for midshipmen.

Some midshipmen also see themselves as role models for others, particularly younger siblings and friends from home. Public opinion of them creates more impetus in some midshipmen for moral development than specific programs at the Naval Academy. The expectations placed upon them drive them to behave morally. One midshipman explained this phenomenon:

> I think that a big part of it is not so much what's going on in the school and what not, but when you are away from school and you recognize that there are people, whether you want to admit it or not. . . .There are people, especially younger people, brothers or sisters or what not, that are kind of looking to you to set the example with decisions you might make. Whether they be simple decisions about what you're going to do one night, or what direction you're going to take your life. You know, people are looking to you for an example. I know for me it's a big deal with my little brothers, so it's kind of helped me become more morally stable.

Many midshipmen realize that whether they like it or not, people look to them for examples. Their status as midshipmen from the Naval Academy alone inspires some moral development.

Midshipmen realize, however, that the process of moral development does not occur overnight. They realize it takes time and practice. For many, the constant presence of good examples creates in them a desire to behave more morally. Another midshipman explained:

> I think that the most important thing is just on a day to day basis. Like he said, "habituation" and it's those officers and senior enlisted exhibiting that behavior. I mean I'm not going to change overnight. I'm not going to flip a switch and suddenly become a moral person. I'm going to notice behavior and after talking about it and thinking about what I need to do in order to achieve that goal of being someone of character, then, you know. . . . I notice what someone does and I say, "That was the right thing to do in that situation….You know, I wish I was strong enough to be that person," and so you kind of look up to them and… you try and exhibit the same behavior that they did. Not necessarily follow in their footsteps, but kind of use them as a guide.

Most midshipmen value the presence of moral superiors around them. Their example inspires the midshipmen to try to make moral decisions and to behave morally.

Whether it is the officers appointed over them or the pressure they feel as midshipmen, moral development is furthered by good examples. Most midshipmen believe that their moral development is directly and positively impacted by the good role models they observe on a daily basis at USNA. Even bad examples offer some inspiration for moral development as midshipmen observe how not to behave. One midshipman said:

> . . . . Even though a lot of the things that he did were completely negative, it sort of made you see the complete opposite and be like, "I don't want to be like that at all." And in that respect, I would say that it had a positive impact because you saw exactly what you didn't want so you could go 180 degrees over and have more of a positive impact. So I think it had a negative impact in the short run. In the end I think it had a slightly positive one, just because you knew what you didn't want to be like. And that is always good to define as well as the positive.

Clearly then many midshipmen place a high value on the examples they observe on a daily basis. Whether a good or bad example, some midshipmen are able to glean positive lessons on moral development. For these reasons, most midshipmen believe that the examples set for them have a positive impact on their moral development.

2. Aspect 2: Open-Forum Discussions

The second aspect that midshipmen believe contributes to the positive impact the Naval Academy has on their moral development is open-forum discussions. These discussions occur in many different realms, but the focus group midshipmen broke the topic into three particular realms. They believe that discussion in the classroom, in character development seminars outside of formal classes, and in more personal settings outside the classroom particularly impact their moral development. It is also worth noting that while many midshipmen believe useful discussion does occur with the officer corps and faculty members, they believe the majority of the useful discussion occurs among peers.

Inside the classroom, most midshipmen value case studies. They believe that the situations presented in real-world case studies offers them a chance to test themselves morally. Their initial reactions and proposed solutions offer them a chance to measure themselves on a moral scale. One midshipman said:

It's probably a lot of case studies that contributes to that [moral development]. It's saying "in this situation what would you do?" And that's where the classroom comes into play in certain classes. I'm thinking of 2/C leadership class that we took. That was probably the biggest classroom setting, even over Ethics, that allowed me to continually think of moral principles on a day-to-day basis because I would walk out of the classroom after having the discussion about whatever topic and I'd think "would I be able to do the right thing in that situation?" because, I mean, obviously some of the discussions aren't necessarily going to have some end that says what the right thing is, but a lot of them do. So if you think about what is that right thing that they just told you about, then you can decide for yourself how you measure on that moral scale.

The classroom discussion then becomes a springboard for thoughts about moral dilemmas that some midshipmen think about even after the class is over. Thinking about their own performance and their standing on their own moral scales fosters moral development. Thinking about and wrestling with the issues results in students who are more self-aware, more self-reflective, and more self-critical. The Ethics and Character Assessment Conceptual Paper reports that these traits are instrumental to the development of moral awareness, moral reasoning, moral courage and moral effectiveness (United States Naval Academy, 2003).

As if to verify this sentiment, other focus group midshipmen echoed these comments. With an emphasis on the group discussions, midshipmen believe several of their classes offering case studies have the greatest positive impact on their moral development. Peers' and superiors' perspectives in situations inspire the individual midshipmen to personal moral growth. Another midshipman said:

I think what's had the most positive impact on my moral development has probably been classes such as ethics and leadership where we've gotten into groups and discussed certain aspects of leadership, and ethics and morals. . . .With the case studies and actually gotten different officers' and other midshipmen's opinions and views on morals and ethics.

Many midshipmen value their peers' and their superiors' ideas and solutions to moral dilemmas. Open-forum discussions that afford these opportunities have a positive impact on midshipman moral development.

31

Other midshipmen give credit to classes outside of the formal ethics and character development realm. Some believe that classroom discussion within their academic majors stimulates moral development. Another midshipman described this:

> I think some classes more than others give us a chance to talk about things and ethical concepts….I'm an English major, so often the stuff that we read sort of gets into that area. So a lot of the professors I've had . . . .Just being in that class we get a lot of chances to talk about…stuff like that which I think has helped me a lot – my major. . . .Most of the time I think about stuff is when I'm in my English classes.

Discussions on moral concepts and moral development do not just occur in character development, leadership, or ethics courses. Many midshipmen also learn and progress through discussions in other classrooms.

Many midshipmen also gain a great deal from character development efforts outside of the formal classroom. The first class character development seminars (CDS) particularly offer valuable small-group discussions. Even though midshipmen may occasionally disagree with their peers on how to handle a moral dilemma, the interaction and discussion appear to be the key to moral development in the midshipmen's eyes. One midshipman described it:

> At the CDS seminar, the firstie one, it was actually interesting seeing my classmates' views on some of the issues, you know, how to deal with this and their reactions to some things. It was a bit of a shock. It was like, "oh, gosh! Is that really how they see it? Is that really what they would do?" It kind of helped me think about it more and think "I don't agree with them." And then wonder why and make sure that my thinking on everything was up to snuff or if I'd missed something.

This self test in moral standing challenges midshipmen to decide moral dilemmas, but also forces them to be ready to justify their decisions and actions. As designed, the CDS seminars give midshipmen the opportunity to become more self-aware, self-reflective, and self-critical.

Much like the formal classroom efforts, many midshipmen see the CDS seminars as another opportunity to challenge themselves. Again, the open forum, small-group discussions have a positive impact. Most midshipmen see these CDS seminars as an opportunity to discuss real-life scenarios as opposed to their perceptions of underclass

32

character development forums where the midshipmen believe they are simply told what is right and what is wrong. One midshipman said:

> I think the character development that we've had as firsties was probably the best influence that I've had because we finally got to sit around and talk to our classmates and talk to some officers about real-life applications instead of the first three years where you're just sort of told what's right and wrong. This time I got to think for myself and I liked it.

Being allowed to discuss the issues without being told they are right or wrong is important to most midshipmen. While this is not always possible, it does make a positive contribution to midshipmen moral development from the midshipmen's perspective.

Other settings offer the same type of small-group discussion, but also add the element of real-life combat experience. Forums like the Ethics Center's dinners offer some midshipmen a chance to confront the actual situations faced by combat veterans the midshipmen respect and look up to. One midshipman described his experience at a recent ethics dinner:

> I think the biggest influence has been this year's more intimate ethics dinners that we've had….[Y]ou volunteer to go and you hear somebody talk and then you have a little discussion with them about it. I went to the guy who stopped the My Lai Massacre and it was just being able to sit there at dinner with him with a group no larger than 20 people and really get to know him and get to hear his story and everything. . . .This helped me to visualize my goals of being a moral and proper officer.

For many midshipmen, the element of combat experience seems to add a sense or urgency and importance to their moral development. These intimate settings inspire midshipmen to take their own moral development more seriously.

More than other sources of open-forum discussions, most midshipmen value their peers and the perspectives they bring to every-day situations. This is the case especially in real-life situations that occur outside the classroom or character development seminars. They see their peers as a means to broaden their own views. One midshipman said:

> I think the way the peers . .There's good and there's bad and associating with both of those may not change your views but it broadens your views. If you see something that one of your friends does that you like, you can adopt that into the way you do things and if you see something you don't like then you can know that you don't want to do things that way.

33

Peers, then, expand the bounds of a particular midshipman's thinking. Whether these differences are due to different pre-Academy life experiences or other Academy specific experiences, midshipmen help each other to morally develop.

It is important to note that most midshipmen realize that their peers can have either a positive or negative impact on their moral development. Most midshipmen look to a small, but close group of peers for moral support. Through discussion, many midshipmen believe their peers offer support for morally sound decisions and actions. Outside of formal moral development methods, midshipmen believe that their peers are the one support that will not let them down. In dealing with moral dilemmas, most midshipmen look to their peers for confirmation of morally sound behavior. Regardless of whether the decisions are actually morally sound or not, these midshipmen believe that many of their closest peers hold the right answers. One midshipman said:

> When you go through the Academy, you are challenged to make moral decisions, the correct decision and everything like that. A lot of times, if you didn't have your friends there to watch out for you, or you knew that they wouldn't support you, you might make the wrong decision. But when you have your friends there, it makes it a lot easier.

At the same time, these midshipmen feel a responsibility to reciprocate this support and trust when their peers are faced with a moral decision. Another midshipman confirmed this:

> I think just talking with your classmates is important too because you build something and you don't want to go back on it. You have friends and you don't want them to think less of you because of what you do.

This trust that is built up among peers is the key to support in times of moral need. Many midshipmen believe that their responsibility is to their peers for moral support. They believe in supporting and being supported by their peers.

Many midshipmen believe the concept of moral courage is central to their moral development. Outside the classroom, midshipmen's moral courage is most likely going to be tested by their peers. Whereas some midshipmen are not likely to confront a superior with a perceived moral misdeed, confrontation with peers is difficult, but not impossible. One midshipman described this:

I think you learn from your classmates because, like they say, peer leadership is often the hardest and when it's actually put into play you can really see what type of morals your friends have good or bad. I think more often too, you're going to bring a situation up when you think it's wrong rather than when you see a superior do something immoral. Or if you think it's wrong you are less likely to speak up – at least here.

Another midshipman added:

The only way you gain, I think, moral courage and test your morals or values is being put in positions where those will be tested.

Moral courage is gained through interaction, discussion, and even confrontation with peers. Along with Academy officials, many midshipmen realize that the confrontation often required for moral courage is a key part of moral development. Discussion and confrontation with peers develops helps midshipmen to develop morally.

3. Aspect 3: Responsibility

Most midshipmen believe that the responsibility to care for the people entrusted to them has a positive impact on their moral development. They feel responsible for their actions and how they affect others. The Naval Academy's goal of teaching leadership contributes to placing decision-making responsibilities in the hands of the midshipmen. For several midshipmen, leadership education, in many ways, inspires moral development. Many Midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy has a positive impact on their moral development due, in part, to the responsibilities placed on them.

Responsibility for decisions and actions has the greatest positive moral impact when the decision or action has a materially negative impact on the people around the midshipmen. They personally feel the pressure to take care of their people by providing for their needs and wants. One midshipman remarked:

Once you ultimately make a decision that negatively impacts someone else and you see how much they are let down and you feel like you have just done terrible. And you say O.K. I have to correct myself on this. It's ultimately taking responsibility for whatever position you're in and seeing what you owe to those that you are making decisions for.

Most midshipmen believe that they owe it to their charges to make decisions that not only appeal to them, but also are morally sound. If they fail in this endeavor, they are hurt and believe that they must correct themselves in future decision making.

At the same time, morally sound behavior does not just affect the individual midshipman making the decisions. External responsibilities also come into play. People see moral behavior and react to it. Whether others emulate the behavior, or simply admire it, moral examples are important. One midshipman discussed this phenomenon:

> One of the things that has strengthened my morals is just being a squad leader and for the first time really having people that you are responsible for and you're supposed to take care of. It shows you that your morals are not just for you, but also affect the people that you're around and that you associate with all the time. It's not just a personal thing. It's external as well.

This external aspect of moral decision making reinforces the importance of good moral examples. As stated before, many midshipmen place a great deal of value in the examples set by the officer corps and faculty at USNA. After observing the positive impact that good moral examples have on their moral development and dealing with the responsibility for those subordinate to them, many midshipmen begin to see the importance of, and strive for, sound moral decisions and actions.

For several reasons, some midshipmen believe that their leadership development is closely aligned with their moral development. They believe that knowing right from wrong and acting on this knowledge is the key to being a leader of character. Naval Academy leaders envision the school as a "leadership laboratory" where mistakes are expected on the path to leadership. Many midshipmen understand that they will make mistakes, but also believe they learn more from these mistakes and failures. Another midshipman described this:

> For me, I was talking about being placed in a position of leadership and ultimately letting some other people down that caused me to quickly align my moral values so that I knew what was right and wrong because. . . .you know that you're supposed to care about them and take care of them because that's what your job is. Then you ultimately feel like you've not done the right thing and you're failing in going towards that ultimate goal of character and being a successful person. . . .

Most midshipmen believe that it is their job to take care of their people. Their leadership classes have taught them that they are not progressing towards becoming officers of character if they are failing at the responsibility for caring for and taking care of their people.

In addition to recognizing the external affects of responsibility for others and learning from failures, some midshipmen are morally developed by having the responsibility to enforce rules. These midshipmen recognize the importance of moral courage in their path to moral development. As upperclassmen, the responsibility for making rules, setting the standard for others to follow and then enforcing that standard (which often requires moral courage) exerts a positive impact on the midshipmen's moral development. A midshipman commented:

> So I'd say that the Academy has had a positive influence because most recently, like 2/C and 1/C year because that's when you're in charge and when you're the person making rules or you're the person who has to set the standard and all that kind of stuff. That's when you have no choice but to kind of step up. . . .

Some midshipmen recognize a responsibility to "step up" and enforce the Naval Academy standards. Many midshipmen believe they have "no choice" but to accept this responsibility. In the process, they learn valuable lessons in moral courage because they feel they gain the courage to correct the shortcomings of their peers and subordinates.

As many midshipmen progress in their careers at the Naval Academy, their responsibilities become more important to them. Aside from their belief, explained earlier, that the expectations placed on them induce and accelerate their moral development as they near graduation, their increasing responsibilities for decision making as graduation approaches is another reason some midshipmen believe the Naval Academy has a positive impact on their moral development. The decisions themselves seem to become more important as the midshipmen near graduation and commissioning. With one eye towards their roles in the fleet, responsibility for making decisions cultivates a sense of urgency for their own moral development. One midshipman said:

> First class year when they actually throw you into some leadership positions and you're like a squad leader or company commander or something like that, and you actually have to make decisions concerning

people's conduct you immediately see the ramifications of those actions and it gives you a really good feeling for how important your decisions are going to be especially when you get out into the real world.

This concept of "the real world" can be equated to life in the fleet. This point is further explained by another midshipman.

I think the biggest thing that's changed me is just getting closer and closer to commissioning – just realizing it. Because I mean when you are a youngster and taking that ethics class it doesn't really smack you in the face what you're going to be doing in two years. But when you're a first class you realize the stakes are going to be pretty high soon. Maybe my buddy. . . .Maybe his welfare might come second to doing the right thing.

Proximity to graduation makes moral development more important for individual midshipmen. Realizing that responsibility only grows as an officer candidate and later an officer has a large impact on the moral development of some midshipmen.

4.   Aspect 4: Sports Participation

Sports are a major part of Naval Academy life. All midshipmen are indoctrinated on the rules and regulations of many sports. In addition, all midshipmen are required to participate in sports whether at the varsity, junior varsity, club, or intramural levels. In addition to being required for the physical development aspect of the mission, sports also play a role in moral development. Sports teams force a participant to be accountable to his or her teammates because on the field, there is no way to hide from them. In addition, they force participants to depend on one another and trust their teammates. For these reasons, many midshipmen believe that sports have a positive impact on their moral development.

Many midshipmen believe that acts on the fields of friendly strife are on display for all to notice. If mistakes are made, the offender must stand up and accept responsibility for the mistake and learn from it. Other avenues of Academy life offer places midshipmen can hide from responsibility and accountability. One varsity athlete said:

I think the most important thing has been playing football because when you're on the field, there's nowhere to hide. A lot of times in other places and other situations people try to hide. They can't hide behind rules or hide behind the administration or whatever. . . . When I'm on the field,

there's like 50,000 people there and they're all looking at you so you can't hide. . . .So I think it teaches you to stand up for what you believe or what you think you should do without hiding.

Athletics require midshipmen to be accountable for their actions much like the more punitive conduct system. Their actions on the field however are open for all to see and cannot be hidden. Another midshipman said:

You see why people commit honor offenses in the hall. It's the people that are trying to get out of something. It's not like they are trying to avoid something, but it's like they are trying to avoid taking accountability for their actions. I think being on an athletic team teaches you that if you do something wrong, it's your fault. If you don't take responsibility then you are affecting the whole team.

Sports participants feel a responsibility to their team. Mistakes and immoral behavior affect not only the individual, but the whole team. Knowing the hard work put forth by every other member of the team, no midshipman wants to the individual who secures defeat. This idea explains how team members experience moral development through their mutual commitment to each other.

Along the same lines, teammates develop strong bonds of trust between one another. Their success depends on every team member contributing. Whereas academics and life in Bancroft Hall depend largely on individual effort, according to some midshipmen, members of sports teams depend on one another. Another midshipman explained this point.

I played hockey for a couple of years and I know it's the same for lacrosse, football, and a lot of other sports. You can trust the people you are out there on the field with. You can trust them to be there, to do this and if they're not, then you know you're going to say something to them.

Most midshipmen on sports teams not only trust their teammates to do their jobs, but they also trust that if they are doing something wrong, a teammate will correct them. Accountability and moral courage are slightly different in other areas of Academy life for some midshipmen. Moral courage, it seems, is easier for some midshipmen in sports. The mutual dependence on one another found on sports teams encourages moral development for many midshipmen.

39

Finally, many midshipmen believe that their conduct on the field is largely unregulated by the administration as it is in Bancroft Hall and other areas. They say that responsibility lies with the midshipmen alone. They depend on each other in sports unlike any other setting at the Naval Academy. In fact, throughout all the focus groups, not one midshipman mentioned his or her coach, referee or other sports authority. They believe that in sports the concepts of team and teammate are most important. Another midshipman explained this concept.

> I think that sports here or athletics here, whether intramural, club or varsity is the one thing where people are actually depending on each other which is what it's going to be like when we graduate. People are going to depend on us and I think through athletics we do get a little more of a sense of responsibility than what we might get in Bancroft Hall. There are people who will tell you that there is some ranking system and people are technically depending on us, but you've got Big Brother looking at you all the time making sure you are doing the right thing. Through athletics, I think you are forced to do it because you know it's the right decision.

Most midshipmen believe that sports force them to make sure they are doing the right thing. For this reason they believe their participation in sports at the Naval Academy has a positive impact on their moral development.

C. FACTORS FOR A NEUTRAL IMPACT ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Given the mission of the Naval Academy and the effort by several different groups to morally develop midshipmen, it is curious that many midshipmen believe that the school has no effect on their moral development. As questions 128 and 129 of the values survey indicate, large numbers of midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy is having a neutral impact on their moral development. Focus group midshipmen note several aspects that contribute to this belief including: 1) programs make no dramatic difference, 2) their peer relations, 3) parents already gave them all the moral development they need, 4) aspects of the NE-203 mandatory ethics class, 5) Academy programs are seen as too many, too routine, and too repetitive, 6) moral development rests with the individual, and 7) a mentality of directed development.

1. Aspect 1: No Dramatic Difference

Many midshipmen believe that if they can not feel a difference, there is no difference. In a sense, the lack of any life-changing event or perceived transformation

leads many midshipmen to believe that the Naval Academy is having no effect on their moral development. A midshipman verified this notion.

> I'd say that I think I was a pretty moral person before I came here too. I think if . . . . I haven't had any type of large experience or witnessed any type of huge, like moral dilemma here at the Academy that changed me one way or the other.

Many midshipmen believe that their life experiences prior to the Naval Academy are far more valuable in their moral development than Academy programs. Academy programs do not offer them the catalyst that they think is required to spark moral development.

2. Aspect 2: Peers

There are other midshipmen who believe that their peers contribute to the neutral impact they feel the Naval Academy has on their moral development. They believe that some midshipmen within the brigade do not espouse the same values that they were raised with. For this reason, these midshipmen tend to ignore much of the moral development efforts presented and more importantly, refuse to learn from their peers with different values. These midshipmen do not specifically believe the Naval Academy has a negative impact on their moral development because they tightly hold on to the values they were raised with. Others do believe this and will be discussed later. One midshipman explained this idea.

> I think people are pretty set in their moral values when they get here. . . . They are immersed in an environment where a lot of other people don't hold those same values that they hold and . . . .so they don't think the Academy has morally developed them.

3. Aspect 3: Parents Gave Them All They Need

Another reason for the perceived neutral impact on moral development is the moral values midshipmen believe their parents have instilled in them prior to their Naval Academy experience. Many midshipmen consider themselves lucky that their upbringing taught and reinforced moral behavior. At the same time, however, these midshipmen believe that this moral upbringing has left the Naval Academy little to teach. One midshipman said:

> . . . . I don't really think that I have any different morals than I did before I got here. So that may just be me and I've gone through all these things and everything that I've learned in these things are the same things that

my parents tried to instill in me and if this is the way to be moral, maybe I was just lucky in that respect because that's how my parents chose to raise me. For the most part, I think they [Naval Academy programs] are doing a good job. It's the same things I've heard my entire life though, so I don't really see it as changing me very much.

Since the lessons learned in Naval Academy programs are very similar to the things many midshipmen have heard their entire lives, they have little effect for some midshipmen. Many midshipmen believe that they get to Annapolis with all the tools they will ever need for moral development. A midshipman said:

I think you come here with it or you don't. I think you learn the system and whoever learns the system better is going to succeed at this place. But I don't think it has morally developed me . . . . I think it's the way you're brought up and your environment that you've had your entire life and this is only four years of your life.

Some midshipmen believe that the four years in school cannot alter or fix what eighteen years or more have taught them. Many believe that they have it or they do not. Ultimately then, some midshipmen believe that their upbringing has a major impact and the Naval Academy has had little impact on their moral development.

4. Aspect 4: NE-203

Aspects of the NE-203 class are another reason why some midshipmen believe the Naval Academy has no impact on their moral development. Many midshipmen have great expectations for the NE-203, the mandatory ethics class. This class is organized into two components. Once a week, several classes combine for a mass lecture delivered by a civilian professor. The remaining scheduled class time consists of meetings in separate sections made up of 10-12 midshipmen. These smaller groups are led by a senior military instructor to incorporate a wide range of seasoned military experience. When some midshipmen get to the class however, they begin to feel disappointed by what the class actually offers. As stated earlier, midshipmen value real-life examples. Many believe that the ethics course falls short in this area and instead becomes a more abstract and idealistic course. One midshipman described his perception of the ethics course.

I mean they [ethics classes] are hyped to be the "big thing" that's thrown at you to try to help you with morality, but I think it's mostly just abstract

and not really real-life situations. It's pretty much about us having discussions and approaching everything as "what would Kant do?" rather than what am I going to do if I'm ever actually faced with this situation. I think it's a little too abstract and idealistic.

Expecting a class that really challenges them with real-world situations, many midshipmen are disappointed when they perceive the class to be abstract. This perception turns midshipmen off to the course and moral development.

The midshipmen who do believe the ethics class had a positive impact cannot remember enough about the class to value it highly two years later. Some midshipmen vaguely remember some ideas and helpful things drawn from the class, but nothing dramatic or life-changing. One midshipman remarked:

> I remember ethics class as being more of an academic exercise – like a philosophy based class. I don't remember too much. I think we tried to like apply things to real world situations, but I don't remember it being particularly useful in that realm. There is some use in learning the ethical theories behind these kinds of things so that you can talk intelligently about a subject you, you know, but I don't remember it being, or affecting me that greatly in my moral development.

They believe that they learn less from ethics class because it is taught sophomore year. Several midshipmen describe that year as "being in a coma" with their tough academic loads including calculus and physics. Another midshipman recommended moving ethics class to first class year.

> I think we should take ethics class as a firstie instead of as a youngster because, I don't know about the others, but when I was a youngster I was busy doing physics homework and statics homework and all that kind of stuff. Sure ethics was good, but I never really completed all the readings and that sort of thing. Now it would be nice to go through that and now there's more of a focus in what's to come in the future instead of just trying to get through this now. I think we would take a lot more of it to heart and remember a lot more.

With their concentration elsewhere during the course, some midshipmen believe that the ethics course taken their sophomore year did little to morally develop them. Many of these midshipmen believe that having the ethics course closer to graduation would enhance its effect on their moral development.

In addition, when involved in some of the class or seminars, some midshipmen believe the language used makes learning from the experience more difficult. They believe that the philosophical language and thought processes detract from their ability to grow morally. Another midshipman said:

> I would say the actual ethics seminars where everyone comes in for about an hour each week. About three or four sections would meet. You would have somebody speak – I'm not sure if it was a professor or the chairman or somebody who would come and speak to you about some ethical topic. A lot of times the language was, like too complicated for me to understand and it would tune me out. I'd end up getting nothing out of the lecture.

Blaming the perceived abstract nature of the class, some midshipmen find it difficult to pay attention or learn from the lectures. Although the courses aim to incorporate real-world examples and dilemmas, these midshipmen do not believe this aim is accomplished.

Most midshipmen do appear to value the small-group portion of the class. When grouped with ten of their classmates, midshipmen generally agree that the class was useful in their path to moral development. The larger group sessions, however, were often cited as having no impact on their moral development. Further describing the ethics course one midshipman said:

> . . . . A couple of days a week you were in class with your professor and there were like ten people in your classroom and you talked about things and that was great. Then once a week they stuck you in a big class with like 200 or 300 people and you sat there and watched a power point about all these old thinkers. That was the worst experience ever. Half of us fell asleep, half of us didn't talk and . . . . I hated that class.

Many midshipmen believe that the large-group sessions of power point lectures are invitations to sleep. This effort is perceived by midshipmen as having no impact on their moral development.

5.   Aspect 5: Programs Too Many, Too Routine, Too Repetitious

Other midshipmen believe that they are not morally developed by some academy programs because they are simply a "check in the box." The multitude of mandatory academic lectures, classes, and seminars take a great deal of the midshipmen's most

precious commodity: time. The programs that midshipmen believe drain their time with little benefit are perceived to have not impact on their moral development. One midshipman said:

> I get the feeling that most of these ethics lectures, most of these character development and moral development seminars that we go to are kind of more for the administration to say "look what we're doing with these kids," more than for any positive impact that they are going to have in us. I think most of us have figured that out after four years at this place. Check in the box. . . .

Having heard the same things many times, many midshipmen develop the attitude that some of their training is a waste of time. This attitude is brought on by what they term "check in the box" mentality. Though this is certainly not the prevalent sentiment among midshipmen, some do feel that their training is merely for show. Another midshipman in a separate focus group echoed these same words.

> . . . . As far as the system with character development and honor, I think a lot of times it's not taken seriously enough and it's just a matter of getting a check in the box. I guess the command is required to talk to us about that stuff a specific number of times a year. It seems a lot of times like those briefs are just thrown together and it's more just so they can say they talked to us about it and put the check in the box rather than actually developing us in any way.

Although they do not consider this "check in the box" mentality to have a negative impact on their moral development, they do believe it results in the Naval Academy having no impact on their moral development. The attitude that results from this perception further hinders moral development efforts. These midshipmen believe that they are not morally developed by the Naval Academy because the training is canned for external effect.

Some midshipmen believe that the multitude of academic classes, and lectures in the area of moral development are just too much. This perception results in midshipmen becoming closed minded to the educational experience and inspires the attitude mentioned above. In fact, many midshipmen begin to see their academic endeavors to morally develop as a joke. Another midshipman said:

. . . . Everyone in their own right has moral development over time and you learn that through mistakes and you learn that through experiences. And I think when we're at school and these things just keep getting beaten into our heads, that they all of a sudden become a joke to us. It's not something that we take value in rather than going out and experiencing things. At the same time, they expect 18 and 19 year old kids to be ready to become an officer and have the moral and ethical values that an officer should have. It's kind of ridiculous to think that. To counteract that, they try to keep feeding us these ideas, these things that I think it's way over done. I definitely think I've taken stuff from some of these classes, but on the whole, it's more seen as a joke by the students.

Many midshipmen shut down when they perceive that the requirements are overdone. Whereas this is not seen as having a negative impact on their moral development, it drives the perception that the Naval Academy is having no impact on it.

Too much perceived repetition turns some midshipmen off to the possibility of gaining morally through the Academy's efforts. They believe that even though moral development is part of the school's mission, several classes make the same points and overlap so much that their moral development suffers. One midshipman said:

We have two leadership classes and we have ethics class. . . . The second leadership class was basically a combination of the first leadership and ethics class that we took. I mean, I personally thought it was regurgitating the information that we had learned in the past. You know, again, I am not at the point where I know all the answers, so I don't have a great suggestion for it, but definitely in all the extra curricular activities that we have to do like the ethics lectures, the seminars and all that – I think it's way overdone.

These midshipmen perceive that repetition seems to hinder their moral development.

6. Aspect 6: Moral Development Rests with the Individual

Many midshipmen expressed the belief that moral development ultimately rests with the individual. Since many midshipmen choose not to gain from Academy moral development efforts, the Academy's efforts are seen as neutral. One midshipman explained:

A lot of the programs, even CDS and ethics class and things like that – you can just kind of go through the motions and not really learn anything from it. Even like . . . . I committed an honor offense as a youngster and I had to go through honor remediation. Even that, to a large extent, you can

just go through the motions and not really get anything out of it. . . .
There's no real mechanism here that's going to make them get anything
out of it.

Moral development relies on each individual choosing to progress along his or her own path. For this reason, no mechanism can be devised to ensure midshipmen morally develop. Some midshipmen realize that the programs are what they make of it. They realize that moral development is in many ways a choice. Large numbers however, choose to reject any moral development efforts and therefore view academic efforts as having no impact on their moral development.

7.   Aspect 7: Directed Development

The last aspect explaining why midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy has a neutral impact on their moral development is termed "directed development." This idea is described by many midshipmen as being *told* the right answer. Many midshipmen believe that the underclass character development seminars do not offer them the chance to think for themselves. One midshipman said:

It has gotten better with second class and first class CDS, but before, plebe
year and youngster year, you really didn't seem to have much of a say and
you really didn't seem to get much out of it. Those are the two years that
you are really developing your morals and ethics within the context of the
military and in the context of military situations and it didn't really seem
like you got much of an opportunity to come to your own decisions during
those two years. It was more done by whoever the moderator was whether
it was an upperclass of an officer.

These midshipmen believe that being told the right answer regardless of their opinion negates any moral development the midshipman may experience. Many midshipmen see this as moral development by direction and resist the direction. They believe that this problem ultimately results in no moral development.

Although many expressed an appreciation for them, first class character development seminars are not completely immune to this problem either. Believing that they are being manipulated to evoke the desired response, some midshipmen expressed their displeasure with the first class seminar. One midshipman said:

The CDS session that we just had [first class year] . . . . At the end of the
day, they told us that it was basically geared to go down one path and you

end up choosing the decision that they would have chosen, or whatever the Captain that was leading it. I feel like you go in there and they make you feel like it's a really broad area but what they're doing is just trying to funnel you down to one belief system and I don't agree with that.

If some midshipmen perceive that they are being driven in a particular direction, they become very defensive and cease to develop. This perception influences many midshipmen to choose to ignore any benefits from the training.

On occasion, this defensiveness can lead to tension in an environment designed to foster growth and learning. If midshipmen fall short and guidance from seasoned leaders is necessary, the manner in which it is presented is very important to developing midshipmen morally. One midshipman related a story showing why he believes the first class character development seminar did not help him develop morally.

I was at a firstie CDS day and we had case studies from actual navy cases and I was pretty much yelled at by a Commander because he didn't agree with the way I would handle some of the cases and he told me that I would make a really poor officer in the navy. He had more choice words because one of the cases was up in the air, and a lot of people agreed with me, except that I spoke up at the luncheon and he just tore into me about how could I consider myself a firstie at the Naval Academy and have such poor morals. I've talked to officers from the fleet and they would have done the same exact thing and it just sort of led me astray from being morally developed by my character development seminar.

If handled in a way that does not explain the error, or in a way that puts the midshipman on the defensive, moral development ceases according to some midshipmen. Another midshipman had a similar experience.

I definitely remember one time where a situation was proposed that I saw to be a gray area and I said I wouldn't turn someone in for something in a certain situation. I was told that I was wrong and that my instructor didn't want me in his navy and that was a little harsh I thought. . . .

Most midshipmen want their thought processes to be morally sound. They believe that they are ready to make moral decisions. If they are not allowed to make these decisions as they see fit, defensiveness and cynicism results. Many midshipmen then believe that their moral development is stifled. Another midshipman remarked:

Where a lot of the other training that we do here at the Academy, whoever is running them, whether it be an officer or whether it be a civilian. . . .

48

They don't seem to understand that we also can make a decision. So I think it makes you cynical because having someone tell you that you're wrong, when you're actually putting in effort to think of something, or actually come to a conclusion that you think in you mind is right. So I think one of the bad influences is just the attitude taken with midshipmen that we don't necessarily know anything and that what we're saying is wrong. Just because they made this decision this way in their past experiences, that that's the only way you can go. I just don't agree with that one at all.

Another midshipman put the problem for midshipmen more succinctly. He said, "The problem is that when we are in a training session and we do make our own decisions, it's not the one they're looking for." Searching for confidence in their abilities, midshipmen do not believe that their opinions are valued by instructors who believe them to be incapable of making moral decisions. This problem detracts from their moral development.

Expounding on this theme, many midshipmen believe that most of the moral development avenues at the Naval Academy have a certain correct answer that the administration is looking for. If midshipmen see things differently, they believe the administration is quick to jump in and tell them they are wrong. A midshipman remarked:

From my experience, you go to those kinds of classes [ethics] and get told what to do. You get to have discussions, but basically, the teacher interjects and says that you're wrong or tells you what to think. It's positive in that they have a certain moral structure that they want you to follow for the navy, but it doesn't allow you to think for yourself.

Ultimately, most midshipmen believe that they are capable of making morally sound decisions. The denial of this opportunity by scenarios that the midshipmen believe aim for certain outcomes detracts from their moral development. Though this detraction is not seen as having a negative impact, it is one reason why some midshipmen believe the Naval Academy has a neutral impact on their moral development.

In addition to their perceptions about being told what is right and what is wrong, many midshipmen perceive that the Naval Academy falls short in another area they feel is important to their moral development. Many midshipmen desire to know *why* a choice is the morally sound one. They may or may not agree with leaders that a particular

49

choice is right, but they believe that they will not be able to make proper choices on their own unless they understand why a particular choice is right. In fact, some midshipmen see the explanation of why a choice is morally sound as the role of officers and instructors in their moral development. One midshipman said:

> . . . . When officers are presenting some sort of moral principle here, because ultimately we are supposed to be developing morally everyday, the officer's job is to educate. Not just say, "This is what you should do." "This is why you should do it; this is why I adhere to this principle," you know.

If officers and faculty members are not clear on why a choice or decision is morally sound, some midshipmen do not believe they are morally developed. Instead they believe they have just been given another order. Another midshipman expounded on this idea.

> I think they talk about honor and character and what not and they want to guide you down some path that's towards moral enlightenment, but they don't necessarily provide a reason other than it's your duty or you should just because. . . . I think midshipmen have a tendency to go into survival mode a lot of times if they're not provided with guidance on some moral principle as far as reasoning. . . . I'm thinking of everything from honor to why I should tuck my shirt in when I go outside my room to go to the bathroom even though it's next door. It could be a variety of things, but it just has to be within the education system. There just has to be a better job of explaining why something is the correct thing to do, or at least why that's the right direction that you're supposed to be heading in.

Adhering to rules or moral principles on blind faith is not moral development to most midshipmen. They believe in knowing why. Classes and seminars that seek a correct answer with no explanation for why does not accomplish moral development according to these midshipmen. They believe this is directed development and ignore it. This directed development may not negatively impact the midshipmen's moral development, but it does not help it either.

D.   FACTORS FOR A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The focus groups of midshipmen were also asked why they believe the Naval Academy has an overall negative impact on their moral development. These focus group midshipmen responded by describing three distinct aspects of the Naval Academy experience. The aspects include: 1) bad examples from officers, 2) the culture of

Bancroft Hall, and 3) the Honor System in general. The following sections use the midshipmen's words to describe why these aspects contribute to the negative impact these midshipmen believe the Naval Academy is having on their moral development.

1.   **Aspect 1: Bad Examples from Officers**

Despite the efforts to incorporate ethics across the curriculum at the Naval Academy, some midshipmen still believe the school hinders their moral development. As questions 128 and 129 of the Values Survey indicate, some midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy is having a negative impact on their moral development. Focus group midshipmen noted several reasons why this is the case. The first reason is poor examples set by some faculty and staff members.

Even though many midshipmen believed that there are many positive examples that help their moral development, others are more influenced by the few bad examples. One midshipman summed this idea up by saying, "I think some of the people teaching morality here are not necessarily as good as some of the people learning." Many midshipmen seem to remember the negative examples much more vividly than the positive. They particularly notice what they believe is a reluctance for an officer to accept responsibility for his or her actions. Another midshipman said:

> I think I see a lot of that from higher-ups and what not that. . . . Sometimes things come from higher up and then they turn their back on you and try to blame whoever else they can. I see that from midshipmen leadership sometimes and from officers. Especially if something has to do with the battalion and the company officer will go and turn his back on you and try to get himself off the line maybe.

Since they tend to have the most contact with midshipmen, it is not surprising that many of the specific examples contributing to the perceived negative impact involve company officers. Many midshipmen become cynical and lose faith in the principles the Academy is attempting to teach when they perceive that their superiors are engaged in immoral acts or dodging responsibility. Moral development efforts are not reinforced when midshipmen perceive their role models to be saying one thing and doing another. Another midshipman related a story about weekend accountability that illustrates this idea.

One of my guys had to go to a battalion board. . . . He was the weekend guy, which I was last year. . . . We went into this board and everyone said something decent about the kid because he is trying hard. He made a mistake, but it goes all the way up our chain of command to your company officer who just rips the kid apart and says "it's such an egregious offense" and "the whole time not once did it cross his mind that this was wrong" and all this stuff when it's a proven fact that the company officer knew and he knows that a couple of us knew that he knew. But listening to him sit up there and say one thing when in fact you know it's a lie. When you see your superiors trying to say one thing and then turn around and then do another. . . . I did it last year and he was the company officer last year and he knew I was doing it. People in general, usually second class, take too many weekends. Somehow it got overlooked and since there's a problem instead of stepping up and taking some blame he pushes it down.

Examples like this one undermine the importance of moral development for midshipmen. If they see that their superiors do not engage in what midshipmen believe to be moral behavior, many believe that it must not be important and ultimately results in a negative impact on their moral development.

Another poor example set by a company officer illustrates that it is not just the handling of accountability and responsibility issues that can contribute to negative impacts on moral development. Setting the proper example is all encompassing for most midshipmen. They believe that unprofessional behavior negatively impacts moral development too. Another midshipman explained how unprofessional behavior impacted his moral development.

A big negative that I've seen and that I've experienced as far as like ethics and morality and professionalism is. . . . I've just had a lot of bad experiences with company officers and what not. I can tell of at least two occasions with two different company officers that I've had. After someone that I had known got kicked out, and in one case it was even a roommate, I had the company officer come talk to our room some time later and actually bad-mouth this person after they had left. The person had not left for a bad reason or anything like that. . . . Having this person who is supposed to be setting the example. . . . Having them come in and be completely unprofessional and unethical by bad-mouthing who we had been close with or whatever. As much as these people want to build this stuff up, I've seen a lot of them be two-faced and having a definite two sides to it and it just really rubbed me the wrong way.

Again, the poor example set by unprofessional behavior is seen by many midshipmen to be immoral. This example negatively impacts the midshipmen's moral development.

Other, more extreme, examples of poor moral behavior leave an even more profound impression on midshipmen. The extremely negative examples have a way of spreading across the brigade such that almost every midshipman hears about them. One such incident again, involved a company officer and was recounted by a midshipman.

> He [company officer] told a kid when he was leaving that the only way he would be a success in life was if he was on an abortion ad. I though that was pretty rough, I mean, the kid was leaving and he wasn't necessarily like a top performing midshipman – that's why he was leaving. But at the same time, he's a human being.

The same midshipman related another story from the same company.

> I know he called a girl a slut to her face – a youngster in our battalion. He called her a slut because she was watching a movie with a guy with the door shut who was in our company too. He was just mad and stormed in there and was like "you're a slut." He had to apologize . . . . Our company was investigated for equal opportunity type things.

These incidents go a long way toward destroying the hard work that Academy moral development programs do. Some midshipmen take the lessons less seriously because they see the failings of their supposed role models. Their moral development is certainly impacted by these acts.

A final example of poor officer role models touches on the issue of classmate loyalty during a conduct investigation. It highlights the fact that it is not just the Academy chain of command that can negatively impact moral development. Fleet officers can also contribute the Naval Academy experience while on summer cruises. One midshipman related his experience during a conduct investigation that he was involved in.

> Basically what happened is a bunch of people got in trouble, but mine was the only name they had and I was so drunk that I didn't really remember anything. But during this whole thing it was a big, almost like an inquisition to find out who was involved. While they were interrogating me, they sat there and lied to me. Many of these officers were at the Academy so they knew what was going on. I also had a Captain who graduated from the Naval Academy who wasn't attached to the squadron. .

. . He came back to me with his Academy ring on and actually patted me on the shoulder and said he'd had a talk with the other guys and said "I respect what you're doing." I didn't say anything and then he said, "I respect your covering up for your classmates and taking care of them." In fact I didn't have the information to give out. You've got some officers telling you, because they are in a position of authority, that the right thing to do is give them up, then you have somebody else who, although he's an officer, he's not in your direct chain of command or not attached specifically with the Academy saying you're doing the right thing by covering up for your classmates. . . . I mean, I'll be honest, they both kind of seemed right. You want to do the right thing and give up some names, but you also want to protect your classmates and leave it up to them.

Poor examples set by superiors confuse some midshipmen on morally sound decisions and actions. These poor examples are one reason why many midshipmen believe the Naval Academy is having a negative impact on their moral development.

2.   Aspect 2: Bancroft Hall Subculture

The second aspect of the Naval Academy experience some midshipmen believe is having a negative impact on their moral development is the subculture found in Bancroft Hall. They cite several aspects of the culture that contribute to the perceived problem, including the wealth of rules and regulations that permeate their professional and personal lives, a fear of confronting their peers, and the perception that to get ahead, one must cut corners through a series of calculated conduct risks. In addition, many midshipmen believe there is a distinction between moral shortcomings that affect the brigade and those that affect only the individual. Finally, some midshipmen believe that Bancroft Hall forces them to prioritize among several requirements with moral development and behavior falling closer to the bottom of their lists of priorities. In the end, many midshipmen just do what they have seen previous classes do. These cultural problems have a negative impact on moral development according to several midshipmen.

Many midshipmen believe that the atmosphere in Bancroft undermines all efforts to morally develop them. They believe that the fact that they have to live and work in Bancroft Hall under a shroud of rules and regulations creates moral dilemmas that become very difficult to deal with. One midshipman said:

I think sometimes the moral dilemmas that we face come from the disconnect between the fact that it's supposed to be our place of work and our place of living. I remember last year that our company officer decided that we were at the Academy 24 hours a day and so we were on duty 24 hours a day. . . .Great they were trying to make it harder or something like that, but it comes to a point where I realize I'm at school 24 hours a day, 360 days a year or something like that, but there needs to be a time when school ends and life begins because there has to be a balance.

The wealth of rules and regulations in their work and personal lives lead some midshipmen to reject the notions of moral development. They find it more difficult to muster the moral courage to act in their personal lives than in their professional lives. The mixture of the two in Bancroft Hall has a negative impact on their moral development.

This idea of moral courage being more challenging in Bancroft Hall was present across all the focus groups. In fact, every focus group independently mentioned the idea and offered their opinions on it. Most said that they are uncomfortable with many things they see regularly in Bancroft, but are reluctant to raise their concerns. One midshipman said:

People sometimes get cynical about, on the surface we're all straight and narrow, you know, "don't you dare stray from the path for one second." Then at the same time, there's a lot of stuff that everybody knows is not quite kosher, but everybody kind of does it. . . . Just sort of lets it slide and nobody says anything about it. It's kind of one of those uncomfortable things sometimes where nobody wants to say anything, but at the same time, nobody is super comfortable with it. I've felt that way sometimes. I don't know, it sort of feels like groupthink sometimes where nobody wants to be "that guy" who stands up and says all twenty of you are wrong. You kind of wonder if that's all it would take. If someone would just say "I don't know if this is right," he would probably get a few supporters saying "yeah, I'm not real comfortable with this either." A lot of times nobody says anything.

Many believe that it only takes one person to stand up and fix the problems, but they are reluctant to be that one person.

At the same time, many midshipmen expressed their wish that someone would be "that guy." Amazingly, they wish their classmates would step in and correct them when they are straying from the moral path. They blame the conduct and honor systems for

their classmate's reluctance to do this. They believe that their classmates will not hold them accountable for their moral decisions and actions because they feel obligated to involve the conduct or honor systems. Another midshipman said:

> I mean if my classmates actually held me to standards which I'll be honest, they don't, and half the time I don't hold them to standards because, like I said, it's you versus them. Because there's all these punishments involved. . . . If it was just me and them and they were like, "hey man I was really disappointed when you lied to the company officer or you cheated on that test because nobody else cheated and you kind of screwed it up and you put your own honor and your integrity in jeopardy."
> I would be like, "Wow, he said what he meant and that will stay with me forever and hopefully I'll change my ways." But half the time, nobody speaks up because there's all this junk involved.

Feeling like the Naval Academy is an "us [midshipmen] versus them [administration]" fight, midshipmen struggle with moral courage. Many midshipmen believe their responsibility is to their classmates. They must stick together to avoid trouble with the administration. Even though they desire their peers to possess moral courage, they choose to ignore it themselves due to the consequences in conduct and honor proceedings imposed by the administration.

Another confounding point in this discussion is that midshipmen realize that this lack of moral courage is a detriment to their moral development but choose to do nothing about it. They believe that the root of the problem is the fear of confronting a peer. Those that hold their peers accountable quietly via the honor system or the electronic conduct system ("e-fry") are seen as lacking the moral courage to confront and correct their classmates. Another midshipman said:

> . . . . If you mess up morally, nobody says anything – you automatically go up for an honor offense. If you do something conduct-wise, you get e-fried and you might not even know what it is because nobody communicates – there's no confrontation. Again, to gain moral integrity, to gain moral courage, somebody has to come up and say "well you did this wrong," rather than just automatically saying, "Here you get fried for three majors." Or I see you get put up for an honor offense, but nobody said anything because they're too afraid to come and talk to you. I don't think that's moral courage if you don't have the fortitude to come up and tell someone "well this is what I saw you do, this is what you did do" and I don't think that happens here. . . . They're not confrontational.

Many midshipmen want their peers to have the moral courage to confront them, yet they do not want to be the one who has to confront a peer. This lack of moral courage is observed by midshipmen who realize the impact it has on their moral development. These midshipmen believe that the culture of Bancroft Hall with its rules and the consequences of breaking them are responsible for this lack of moral courage. This problem ultimately results in a negative impact on their moral development, but they refuse to correct the problem as they understand it.

Midshipmen believe that the rules in Bancroft dominate their lives. They truly believe that it is impossible to follow every rule. For this reason, many feel that they must decide for themselves which rules are important enough to follow and which ones can be ignored. They believe that the successful midshipmen are the ones who are the best at cutting corners. One midshipman said:

> A lot of the expectations on us are idealistic and, I'll come right out and say it, it's pretty much impossible to follow all the rules in midregs and everything. I don't think it makes unethical or immoral people to have to break a rule every once in a while and sometimes I think people who rise up are the ones who learned how to cut corners the best, as sad as that sounds. You just get put to the test as far as deciding which rules are important and which rules aren't.

Cutting corners and deciding which rules are important is seen as a necessity, rather than improper moral behavior. Many midshipmen reduce this idea to "calculated risks." Another midshipman remarked:

> What you learn at the Academy is how to take calculated risks and that's because we have so many rules and so many things that it doesn't necessarily always come down to whether following the rule or doing something right or doing something incorrectly is a moral decision as much as "what's the end result" and that's what those calculated risks are. That's what I see a lot of at the Academy. Midshipmen just know what they can get away with and what they can't get away with because it's unrealistic to think that we can live by all the rules.

The culture of Bancroft Hall has reduced midshipman morality to calculated risks. Since some midshipmen do not see obeying the rules as the morally sound decision, they do not equate moral behavior with obeying the rules. Instead, they see breaking the rules as choosing among feasible alternatives. In this sense, they are rejecting the moral nature

of their alternatives and thus failing to develop their ability to accept moral obligations. Ever looking forward, these midshipmen know that this tendency could have a negative impact on their ultimate moral development. Another midshipman said:

> There are so many rules . . . . So you have to start picking and choosing. I think that's going to be a huge negative when you get out to the fleet and you start picking and choosing which rules you really need to follow.

Even though some midshipmen realize that the culture of Bancroft Hall is having a negative impact on their moral development, they continue to maintain the status quo and do nothing to change it. Ironically, the recognition that the culture of Bancroft Hall detracts from their moral development does not influence these midshipmen to fix the problem.

The obvious question then becomes why do some midshipmen allow themselves to abide by the prevailing standards that permeate the culture of Bancroft Hall? Many midshipmen would simply say, as one midshipman did, "There are rules that are tolerated to be broken. That's just the way it is." Others point out a distinction between dishonorable behavior that affects the brigade and behavior that only affects the individual. Another midshipman explained this distinction.

> I think midshipmen kind of make a distinction between blatant lying, cheating, or stealing, honorable behavior, and just fudging the system because sometimes it's just so complex and dominant over their lives. They just feel it necessary to take every little advantage they can. You know, take every little thing they can squeeze out and I think that is a lot more tolerated than any type of what midshipmen would call "real" dishonorable behavior like cheating on an exam or something like that.

Another midshipman expounded on this idea.

> I think most midshipmen have a sense to be angry about things that affect other people instead of things that only affect yourself. So like stealing or cheating – that adversely affects other people. If someone lies about something he did over the weekend to get into trouble, that won't affect anybody else directly. And so people are like, "that's OK, he's only hurting himself" but as soon as he starts hurting others by being dishonorable, that's when I would get angry about it.

Many midshipmen believe that dishonorable behavior is judged by its effects on others. The culture in Bancroft Hall allows dishonesty if it does not affect another midshipman personally. Efforts to morally develop midshipmen are hindered by "the way things are."

Other midshipmen blame the cultural problems on priorities. They believe that midshipmen place moral development lower on their list of priorities due to the multitude of other demands placed on them. In other words, the plethora of other demands detract from their moral development. Another midshipman explained this idea.

> I think people let a lot of things slide here because so much is tried to be instilled upon you and there's just so many different things that you do here and you have to go through here that, lots of times, moral development is just not at the top of the list. That is just truthful. I don't think that's really what a lot of people that came here were striving for. So in that respect, they're going to let it slide just because it's not at the top of their priority list.

Regardless of how much emphasis is placed on moral development, the Naval Academy experience is full of requirements and regulations for midshipmen. They believe they are forced to prioritize these requirements. Some midshipmen believe that often their moral development slips to the bottom of their list of priorities. For this reason, they abide a culture in Bancroft Hall that hinders their moral development.

Finally, cultural problems are blamed on what midshipmen have seen throughout their Naval Academy experience. Midshipmen emulate what they have been taught. Similar to the discussion on poor examples in officers and faculty members, most midshipmen attribute many of the cultural problems to the upperclass peers who have trained them in the way things are. This issue is treated separate from the poor example section because most midshipmen believed it to be a general issue with the culture. They had difficulty explaining specific examples because they felt it to be due to a general feeling within Bancroft Hall. The culture, in this sense, feeds on itself. Underclasses see the actions and decisions of upperclass midshipmen and believe at the time that a proper moral example is being set. Consequently, the improper decisions and actions are being taught to each incoming class. One midshipman explained this phenomenon and its effect on him.

I think the reason that I had the viewpoints that I had as a second class and as a youngster is because I was raised by upperclass with the same views and they just set the example and I just followed it. I think that might have had a negative impact on me because they would tell me "this is how it's done, you know, you don't really turn in your buddy; you don't always do the right thing when no none is looking." They set the example and when you're impressionable, even though you get honor training, when you're impressionable as a plebe you don't want to rock the boat or anything. So you're like "OK, I'm going to do like everyone else does, even though I'm hearing something else over here." I think that definitely is a setback for moral development.

Many midshipmen believe that it takes time and experience to learn the difference between good and poor examples in peers. By the time they make this distinction, many believe it is too late and the culture of Bancroft Hall will have already improperly trained a new group of individuals. In this sense, the pervasive culture of Bancroft Hall is defeating moral development efforts at the Naval Academy. This defeat is another major reason why some midshipmen believe the Naval Academy is having a negative impact on their moral development. They feel compelled to "not rock the boat."

3.   Aspect 3: The Honor System

Midshipmen in the focus groups repeatedly cited the honor system as one of the primary reasons why the Naval Academy has a negative impact on their moral development. Their reasons for this opinion are varied. Some believe that the perceived overtraining on the honor concept turns them off to the system as a whole. One midshipman said:

It's almost kind of a turn-off. You just say "well, I'm going to go to sleep on this one or I'm just going to zone out . . . . And it's almost hard to find relevance in it. Sometimes the way they package the honor education. . . . It's just not fresh and it kind of turns you off.

Some midshipmen find it difficult to find the relevance in honor education. The amount of training and the repetitive nature of the honor system lead midshipmen to zone out and ignore the training.

Other midshipmen believe that their experiences and the stories they have heard regarding the honor system have predisposed them to having bad attitudes about honor training. Midshipmen's attitudes about the honor system play a huge role in how the

midshipmen will respond to the system. The cases they hear about and read about create in them attitudes that hinder their acceptance of the precepts of the honor system. Another midshipman remarked:

> I think a lot of people go into it [honor training] with cynical attitudes. Just with a lot of the cases that have come up this last year or two. Some of the cases seem to make a mockery of the system and no one can really take it seriously. Everyone just has this cynical attitude about it and so we don't really go anywhere with it. Whenever we go to an honor lecture or anything, everyone just goes in with a bad attitude and doesn't get anything from it.

Whether it is because of perceived overtraining or because of past experiences dealing with the administration of the system, honor training creates in some midshipmen a bad attitude that hinders their moral development. Rather than reinforcing their knowledge on the honor system, the training is seen as a waste of their time.

In addition to training, many midshipmen take issue with the honor concept itself. They believe that the system itself is flawed because so many aspects of the concept are open for individual interpretation. In short, they believe that the honor concept itself does not work because it is taken too far in many instances. One midshipman said:

> I would go out on a limb right now and just say that I do not believe in the honor concept. I don't believe in what it says because of the way people use it, mostly because it's been taken to an extent that it never needed to be taken to and probably was never intended to be taken by its creator. I just don't think it works.

Along these same lines, officers are seen as playing a key role in taking the honor concept too far. Another midshipman recounted a story illustrating this feeling.

> I've had an officer sort of overextend morals in general. He sort of went from saying if you drink underage, then you're lying in that you swore to uphold the constitution and the constitution is a set of laws that say you can't drink if you're not older than 21. In drinking when you're under 21, you are lying and that's an honor violation. I mean, I think that is totally ridiculous and this was a battalion officer that got up there in front of the entire battalion and went through his little logic. How can you just sit there and listen to this and have any respect for a person like that or have any respect for the moral code here? It's just taken totally out of context.

Believing that the system can be manipulated to whatever effect the administration wants, many midshipmen have lost their faith in the system. Without clear bounds, some midshipmen believe the system, at times, is detrimental to their moral development.

Many midshipmen also see the concept as intensely negative. Even though, as written, the honor concept appears fair and important, midshipmen believe in the end, the system is designed to seek violators and then separate them. Thinking that they are basically good people, some midshipmen see the honor concept as a trap. A midshipman spoke of the negative nature of the honor concept.

> I think the worst thing for me here has been the honor concept itself. I'm a farm boy… and I came here used to doing the right thing while growing up. And you come here and there's this honor concept and they try to scare the living hell out of you thinking every little thing you do could be and honor offense. So you learn the system and you learn what is an honor offense and what is not an honor offense then you try to cheat the system when in fact, I think most of us who go here are basically honorable to begin with. But just the whole basis of the honor concept and trying to weed out the bad people. . . . But it also has a negative effect on a lot of good people too just because of the specifics. You go every single day thinking "is this an honor offense?" when in reality it should be second nature to you.

Perceiving the honor concept as a pitfall they must avoid, many midshipmen reject the honor system. They believe that their moral development is hindered by the constant threat of being brought up on an honor violation. The threat of negative consequences relieves them of the burden of doing the right things because they are the right things even when no one is looking. Most midshipmen believe the honor concept ensures that someone is always looking.

Many midshipmen also perceive that, contrary to the precepts of the honor concept, they are assumed guilty until proven innocent. This sentiment was present throughout all the focus groups. They believe this assumption undermines the moral development efforts of the honor concept so completely that they place no stock in the worth of it. One midshipman said:

> I don't like the way it says that midshipmen are assumed to be honorable, but at the same time, you can't sign your roommate in because you might

be lying. So they are actually assuming that you're not honorable. If the opening line of the honor concept is basically a lie, then why should you even keep reading?

Another midshipman cited his experience with the honor concept as detrimental to his moral development. He said:

> Here, it seems to me, especially with the honor concept, that midshipmen are guilty until proven innocent. It seems like everything from honor boards to these other things. I mean honor should be something we all are to begin with and I think we are, but I sat on my first honor board this year and I thought it was ridiculous. They don't ask you and then take your word for it. They want like investigations and all that. I think that's a huge detriment to midshipmen in general.

Many midshipmen do not believe the perception of guilty until proven innocent is limited to honor board cases. They see this in the administration of the honor system in academia as well.

Some midshipmen believe that faculty members also subscribe to the inherent guilt of midshipmen. One midshipman related a story about her experience with the honor system and its use in academic realms.

> We had a situation in the major I'm in a year or so ago where a kid committed an honor offense doing some stuff with his calculator that he shouldn't have been doing and the major I'm in now has had this huge reaction and all the materials that we were issued like the $200 calculator when we come in – we can't even carry that to class because of it. It's kind of like not a big deal because we've gotten used to it, but if midshipmen are assumed to be honorable then why has this one kid ruined it for the 300 or so of us that are still in the major?

Although this situation was brought on by an honor offense, many midshipmen believe that their treatment is inconsistent with the honor concept. For this reason, they believe that the entire honor system is not fully embraced by the faculty. Although they would not argue that lying or cheating are valued by the faculty, they believe that the positive aspects of the honor concept, such as assumption of innocence, are ignored.

Ultimately, most midshipmen see the Naval Academy as a school of perceptions. The perception of guilt or innocence is what counts. Even if a midshipman is cleared of

any wrong-doing, they believe the honor system ensures that they are perceived as guilty. A midshipman explained this idea.

> I think everyone is guilty until proven innocent really just because this whole school is perception. So I mean even if you go to an honor board and you're found not in violation, every one of your classmates will know that you went to an honor board and you're pretty much guilty. You just don't have the punishment to go along with it. It's too bad, but everyone talks here and everyone knows what's going on really, but you're guilty.

Midshipmen are taught to guard against the perception of wrong-doing. In honor situations, they believe they are powerless to stop the negative perceptions. Their moral development is then hindered by their rejection of the honor concept.

Some midshipmen also believe that the conduct of honor boards themselves have a negative impact on their moral development. They have seen honor boards where they believe impertinent information was brought up to prove a person dishonorable. Rumors of these instances spread throughout the brigade such that many midshipmen fear the thought of an honor board. A midshipman described his experience at an honor board.

> I sat in on an honor board one time and it really had a negative effect on me. I was a plebe at the time and it seemed to me that they focused less on the issue at hand and his honor and they turned it more into a witch hunt. Pulling every bad thing that they could ever find about the kid and do everything that they possibly could do to give him a bad rap and prove him guilty such that it went straight off topic and they talked about things that had nothing to do with the issue at hand. It just seemed like they were trying as hard as they could to get him kicked out and they ignored, in my opinion, overwhelming evidence that he really wasn't a dishonorable person. That had a tremendously negative impact on me seeing first hand how the honor system in that instance was really overwhelmingly trying to kick someone out. That was probably the most negative thing I've ever witnessed.

Another midshipman echoed these same thoughts.

> I kind of see that when someone is up for an honor offense, everything they've ever done kind of just comes in and becomes hearsay. . . . I still see that and I think it has made me really cynical towards the honor system.

Most midshipmen believe that the honor board is merely a way of getting expelled from the Naval Academy. They believe that any blemish in a midshipmen's record is explored

in honor boards. Rumors and experiences reinforce this idea and detract from the effectiveness of the honor system and moral development efforts at USNA.

The results of some honor boards are also viewed as having a negative impact on midshipmen moral development. In particular and surprisingly, the large numbers of midshipmen found in violation, but retained at the Naval Academy, seem to upset some midshipmen. Believing that most midshipmen are honorable and wishing to uphold the highest standards, these midshipmen lose faith in the honor system when large numbers of violators are not expelled. One midshipman said:

> I've never sat on an honor board, but we just had an honor brief two weeks ago and they give us all these numbers about like all these people going to honor boards but like 85% are being retained and only so many are separated and how it's a good thing. All these people are going to honor boards but we are keeping most of them and all that stuff. What's the point? I mean if it's such an egregious offense and they go up to an honor board and we have this honor concept where we are supposed to be honorable midshipmen but we keep 85%? We are retaining all these people who are doing things that they are not supposed to be doing and I just think there's something wrong with the system.

Some midshipmen believe that efforts to retain and remediate large numbers of violators undermine the system. They expressed a concern that the push to retain and remediate large numbers of violators has shifted the focus away from the seriousness of the offenses and more towards the perception of the honor system. Another midshipman said:

> They are trying so hard to be the good guys that I'm not sure they are actually doing their jobs necessarily in those cases. . . . It just seems to me like if that many people are going to honor boards and they make a big deal about how many people don't get separated or whatever it just seems like they're trying too hard to butter us up and say "hey, we're not that evil." If they're concentrating on that or more worried about how they're viewed instead of the outcome of the cases, then I'm not sure I have faith in them.

Even though many midshipmen perceive the honor system as negative in nature, they still understand the seriousness of moral behavior. Though they did not express a wish to separate all violators of the honor concept, many midshipmen did express their concerns about the focus of the honor system.

Many midshipmen also believe there is a huge problem with inconsistencies within the honor system. They hear rumors and stories about honor proceedings that reinforce their concerns. These inconsistencies, they believe, lead to wide-spread cynicism throughout the brigade regarding the administration of the honor system. One midshipman said:

> I've heard of honor cases that have been brought up with the computer cases recently. They were put up for honor offenses, but they didn't deserve to be put up. They didn't have any intent of breaking the honor concept. Some were found guilty for asking someone for help on homework properly following the class policy and one of the people was found guilty and the other was found not guilty. There are a lot of inconsistencies with that and that's brought up a lot of the cynicism within the brigade. It almost makes a joke of the system, I guess.

Although USNA leaders strive to ensure fairness and consistency in all situations, many midshipmen believe that the honor system particularly fails in this endeavor. This failure leads to a loss of faith in the administration of the honor system.

Finally, many midshipmen believe that the distinction between honor and conduct at the Naval Academy has become blurred. They perceive that conduct infractions are often treated as honor violations. At the same time, honor violations are sometimes treated as conduct infractions. The two have become so intertwined that some midshipmen even go so far as to say that they often have trouble distinguishing between the two. One midshipman said:

> They confuse you as to what honor really is, at least what I was taught. I mean, here they equate honor with a punishment or like a number or a percentage like 85%. But in fact how it used to be if you lost your honor then that was something personal. These guys here are like "I cheated or I lied to my buddy but I've got to march this many tours or maybe stand some restriction." I've even heard of something as ridiculous as honor remediation where they have to keep a little honor log and write something honorable each day or something like that. I just think that's silly. How negative is that when people equate these things with that punishment. . . .

These midshipmen see the correction of honor violations with punishment in the conduct system as a detriment to their moral development. Another midshipman said:

When you start micromanaging something like moral development that's when it gets away from the development process. I mean someone can say "you just broke these rules because you didn't have the integrity to uphold the rules when people weren't looking, therefore, you committed an honor offense." You broke a rule, that's conduct. Mixing conduct and honor also jades people's view of the honor concept. It totally backtracks on everything that they teach you for the two, three, four years that you're here.

The mixture of honor and conduct undermines moral development for many midshipmen. They believe that the honor system has become another tool for the conduct system and therefore reject its precepts. For these midshipmen, the importance of the honor system in their moral development is diminished by its association with the conduct system. This problem effectively removes a major tool from the Academy's moral development arsenal.

E.   SUMMARY

The focus groups reveal that midshipmen possess valuable insights into the moral development efforts at USNA. This chapter has attempted to explain why midshipmen believe the Naval Academy is having a positive, a neutral, or a negative impact on their moral development. Those who believe the Academy is having a positive impact on their moral development highlighted four aspects that create this positive impact: positive examples, open-forum discussions, responsibility for making decisions, and participation in sports.

Many midshipmen also believe the Naval Academy is having no impact on their moral development. These midshipmen cited seven aspects of their experience that explain why they believe this They noted that: 1) no dramatic difference was experienced, 2) their peer relations, 3) their parents giving them all the moral development they need, 4) aspects of the NE-203 class, 5) programs too many, too routine, and too repetitious, 6) moral development resting with the individual and 7) a mentality termed "directed development" lead to their lack of moral development in response to Naval Academy moral development efforts. These aspects of their experience, many midshipmen believe, result in no moral development while at the Naval Academy.

Other midshipmen believe that the Naval Academy is having a negative impact on their moral development. These midshipmen cited three aspects of their Naval Academy experience that explain why they believe this. They noted that bad examples of officers at USNA, the culture of Bancroft Hall, and the honor system in general have had a profoundly negative impact on their overall moral development. . These aspects of their Naval Academy experience, some midshipmen believe, detract from their moral development while at the Naval Academy.

V.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A.   OVERVIEW

This study began as an effort to discover why midshipmen responded to the institution's annual Values Survey in the manner in which they did as reported in Chapter III. It was understood that midshipmen are not necessarily the best judges of their own moral development, but they do have a valuable perspective that curriculum and program planners are not normally privy to. This study sought to discover what influences or types of influences the midshipmen feel have the greatest impact on them, so that planners might then be able to employ this knowledge to adjust the emphases of their different programs and methods. Utilizing a clearer understanding of the midshipmen's perspective, policymakers might be more effective at devising, implementing, and assessing programs aimed at the moral development of midshipmen. In short, it aimed to report what works best, what works less well, and what does not work well at all from the midshipmen's perspective. No attempt was made to claim or prove a particular moral development method at USNA as the right or wrong way to achieve the institution's goals.

This study focused on one primary and three secondary questions. The primary question asked how midshipmen perceive that the Naval Academy develops them morally. Understanding that much of a person's moral development occurs prior to any exposure to the Naval Academy, the scope of this thesis was necessarily limited to those influences or experiences that occur after enrollment. The secondary questions then became: 1) Which influences or experiences at USNA do midshipmen believe have the most positive impact on their moral development and why?, 2) Which influences or experiences at USNA do midshipmen believe have the least positive impact on their moral development and why?, and 3) Are there any influences or experiences at USNA that midshipmen believe have a negative impact on their moral development and why? Chapter IV presented the aspects discovered in six focus groups conducted with a total of 45 first class midshipmen. This chapter revisits the findings in the literature compared to what the midshipmen said in the focus groups, and then offers some recommendations for Academy administrators.

B.   SUMMARY

According to Rest and Thoma (1985), undergraduate students undergo moral development simply by engaging in college level education. By extension then, Naval Academy midshipmen are experiencing moral development. Using the DIT, Mustapha and Seybert (1990) and Boss (1994) have found a similar relationship to Rest and Thoma's research. Boss' study specifically evaluated the effects of participation in an ethics course such as the one all midshipmen are required to take. For this reason, Academy midshipmen are undergoing moral development both through their undergraduate work and through their participation in the Academy's ethics course (Rest and Thoma, 1985; Mustapha and Seybert, 1990; and Boss, 1994). Regardless of midshipmen perceptions of the impact of Naval Academy programs, research has found that moral development is actually taking place.

The responses of focus group midshipmen demonstrate that they understand and consider many of the principles necessary to moral development. Many of the aspects cited in focus groups have been linked to successful moral development. Specifically, the observation of good role models has been associated with moral development by Jacobi (1991) and Kram, (1985). In addition, Lickona (1980) and Krtines & Gewitz (1995) have reported that moral development occurs when students are put to the test as in the responsibility delegated to midshipmen. Finally, Haan (1983) has found participation in sports to be a driver of moral development. Midshipmen in focus groups independently cited these aspects of moral development as key reasons why the Naval Academy is having a positive impact on their moral development.

Several midshipmen cited reasons they believe the Naval Academy is having no impact on their moral development, and many of their reasons are specifically addressed in the literature. Most of the literature on moral development contends that moral development is a gradual progress that occurs over the lifetime of a person, not likely to produce the dramatic difference some midshipmen expect. Similar to the findings in this research, moral development efforts at the Naval Academy are likely to supplement the development already inspired by parents, teachers and other role models encountered prior to the Naval Academy experience (Piaget in Lickona, 1980; Rest, 1994).

Some scholars would agree with those midshipmen who said that higher moral development is ultimately a function of the individual. As the Naval Academy's character development assessment paper argues, the Academy can hope only to help midshipmen along their own paths to moral development (United States Naval Academy, 2003). Even though some midshipmen do not believe the Naval Academy has an impact on their moral development, the core ethics course and the myriad of other programs serve to help them progress along their own paths to moral development. The impact may not be noticeable to them in the short term, but research argues that such programs do have a positive impact (Mustapha & Seybert, 1990; Boss, 1994; Rest 1994).

There were some midshipmen who argued that the Naval Academy is having a negative impact on their moral development. These midshipmen should not be discounted as simply "bad midshipmen" who choose not to benefit from Academy programs. Indeed these midshipmen often appeared to be the most mature, most discerning midshipmen participating in the focus groups. They seemed to truly care about their moral development and the efforts employed by the Naval Academy to facilitate it. The aspects they cited were concerns they honestly had about Naval Academy programs.

Their concerns included bad examples set by some officers, the culture of Bancroft Hall, and the Honor system. As demonstrated by Jacobi (1991) and Kram (1985), the research, the power of a positive, morally developed role model is strong. By extension, the power of a negative, morally undeveloped role model could also be strong as cited by the midshipmen.

A wealth of research exists on the power of an organization's culture. Tinto (1975) contended that student development is influenced by student interaction and the institution's structures. Later, Rosen in Callahan & Bok (1980) and Kurtines & Gewirtz (1995) would study the "hidden curriculum" and its power to teach. Focus group midshipmen's comments reflected that research, in speaking of the negative lessons learned from the culture of Bancroft Hall. The focus groups made it clear that the culture of Bancroft Hall detracts from their moral development. While none offered a solution to the problems, all focus groups made the same point.

The honor system was another aspect of the Naval Academy experience noted by some as a contributor to the perceived negative impact on their moral development. These midshipmen appeared to understand the institution's goal of developing in them a sense of moral awareness (United States Naval Academy, 2003), but blamed the honor system for confounding this goal. These midshipmen believe they cannot confidently say what is, and what is not, an honor offense. For this reason, they believe that a major goal of the Naval Academy character development programs is defeated by the honor system. Although they noted several specific aspects of the honor system that they believe to be flawed as reported in Chapter IV, the above problem seems to be the root cause of the negative impact.

C.   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USNA

Based on the responses gathered during the focus groups and a review of the literature on moral development, there are many things that Academy administrators can do to improve moral development efforts.   This   section   will   highlight   six recommendations.

The first of these involves focus in classroom or moral decision making seminars. Many midshipmen expressed a preference for discussing real-world examples of moral behavior.   Midshipmen overwhelmingly expressed an interest in understanding the reasons behind proper moral decisions, so courses and programs should also include discussion of *why* a particular decision was morally sound or morally unsound. Lawrence Kohlberg (1984) emphasized the reason for upholding right. Regardless of the Academy's current aims in the area of moral development, the midshipmen believe this to be a problem. This is an area that can be easily remedied and ultimately help facilitate their moral development.

In addition, there should be a more substantive link between what is taught in leadership courses and what is taught in ethics courses and the character development seminars.   Several focus group midshipmen expressed the belief that there was considerable overlap among what is taught in each of the courses and seminars, but no clear common goals throughout. There should be more communication and collaboration between the administrators of each of the programs to ensure that the aims and lessons of each program are reinforced by the others. Some collaboration among program managers

and course directors currently exists, but the unity of effort is not evident to the midshipmen in the focus groups. Unifying the efforts of the many programs would ultimately increase the efficiency of Academy's leadership and moral development efforts.

A second recommendation that could help improve midshipmen moral development involves community service. Boss (1994) found that students involved in an ethics course who were also required to participate in 20 hours of community service during the course scored higher on the DIT. This finding, in essence, means that students engaged in discussions on morality and also engaged in moral acts are more likely to experience more moral development. Although it could be argued that midshipmen are engaged in moral acts simply by volunteering to defend their country after graduation, some level of community service during the leadership or ethics course may add impetus to their moral development. There is certainly a wealth of opportunity to engage in community service in the metro areas surrounding Annapolis. Groups currently actively participating in community service such as the Midshipmen Action Group could be used as a model or resource for community needs. As service organizations, the Navy and Naval Academy are well suited to serve the community while inspiring moral development in the leaders of tomorrow. This situation presents a win-win opportunity for Academy administrators.

A third recommendation involves the use of a journal. Boss (1994) also found that requiring students to keep a journal increased their DIT scores. Requiring students to maintain and periodically update their journals is a relatively easy way to improve moral development according to the literature. This requirement could be imposed only during the ethics course or throughout their Academy experiences. The journals would force midshipmen to think about the issues they encounter on a daily basis. This reflection as been linked to moral development by Rest (1979) and Lind (1999).

A fourth recommendation addresses what the focus group midshipmen described as the most important aspect of moral development at USNA: their role models. Focus group midshipmen made it clear that role models reinforce moral behavior, good or bad. Academy officials should make every effort to ensure that good moral behavior is

reinforced. For this reason, administrators should create a program or course of instruction that involves initial and periodic refresher training for all faculty and staff members who teach or train midshipmen. Such a course would involve the delineation of expected standards of moral conduct and the importance of proper moral role models. This course would be required of all newly reported staff members and periodically for serving staff members.

The course should use the same basic principles of current midshipmen moral development efforts. In order to ensure the alignment of midshipmen, faculty and staff moral development aims, the program should use the Ethics and Character Development Conceptual Overview paper as its basis. In addition, the course should communicate the importance of explaining *why* morally sound decisions are morally sound. Finally, the course could involve some journaling requirements, similar to those discussed above for midshipmen. Requiring a journal of faculty and staff would force the facilitators of moral development to reflect on the issues, advancing their own moral development and possibly improving the teaching process. A course of this nature would fulfill many of the midshipmen's desires and assist in the continued moral development of faculty and staff members assigned to the Naval Academy. It would serve to unify the entire Academy staff in its moral development goals.

A fifth recommendation involves the assessment of moral development efforts. Academy officials should continue their current efforts to assess the moral development of midshipmen. Though this is a daunting task, it is necessary to continually improve the courses and programs that inspire midshipmen. Assessment efforts should not be limited to the classroom and honor cases. The impacts that other, non-academic programs and experiences have must also be assessed. The culture of Bancroft Hall, responsibility within the Brigade, and endeavors on the athletic fields are examples of other experiences that contribute to moral development at the Naval Academy. A continual, independent assessment of all programs and experiences at the Naval Academy will go a long way toward improving moral development.

A sixth and final recommendation involves the honor system. The efforts to improve the honor system must continue and should include the input of a cross-section

of midshipmen, not just the top performers. In order for midshipmen to believe in and support the honor system, they must have a substantial input. Several midshipmen expressed a great deal of confusion about, and identified perceived misuses of the honor system. For this reason, a clear distinction should be made between the conduct and honor systems. The two systems must continue to operate, but should be completely independent of one another. Although some may argue that the two operate independently currently, many midshipmen perceive the contrary and cite this as a detractor from their moral development.

The precepts of the honor system must be clear and embraced by the faculty, staff, and all midshipmen. For this reason, the input of the faculty and staff should also be incorporated. It is understood that this recommendation breaks with the traditional honor system owned and operated by the midshipmen. It must be considered, however, that the faculty and staff are a big part of the system as well, and they must understand and believe in it for the system to work. With a joint effort on the part of the faculty, staff, and the midshipmen the honor system will be more likely to accomplish its intended purpose.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

During this research assignment, several other potential research questions arose. The first idea involves staff perceptions of moral development at the Naval Academy. Since this thesis addresses midshipmen perceptions of moral development, a future thesis addressing staff perceptions of moral development may prove useful. This thesis could involve focus groups or interviews with staff members, both civilian and military, who control the Naval Academy's moral development efforts. Ultimately, a comparison of the two could prove the most beneficial to Academy administrators.

The second research recommendation would focus on Bancroft Hall and its impact on moral development at the Naval Academy. Issues of classmate loyalty and alcohol abuse are often discussed and studied at the Naval Academy, but they are perhaps only visible symptoms of other underlying problems. Research into the culture of Bancroft Hall would prove beneficial in exposing other, deep-seated practices that impact how midshipmen think and behave. This thesis has taught the researcher that there are a wealth of principles and lessons taught and learned within the confines of Bancroft Hall

independent of any official Academy program. Often, these lessons are unspoken, but learned nonetheless. Studies of this culture could prove valuable and important in eliminating several problems Academy administrators seek to combat.

The third research recommendation would build on the work of this thesis. A researcher could further explore any of the aspects found in chapter 4. In particular, the power of the role model may prove interesting. Many midshipmen said that the power of the negative example is stronger that the positive. This researcher found this sentiment fascinating, but outside the scope of this thesis. Further study of this phenomenon is warranted.

With a unified front to moral development, all Academy moral development efforts will benefit. The time and effort required to research and implement these recommendations will be well worth it to Academy administrators. As Dr. Aine Donovan puts it, "The moral educator is in the seed-planting business, never fully grasping the long-range effects of his or her impact" (1999). Hopefully, the insights of the midshipmen and the above recommendations will help to ensure the seeds planted at the Naval Academy will prosper within the Navy and Marine Corps' leaders of tomorrow.

APPENDIX. GENERAL FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

Question 1:

What is your personal definition of moral development?

Question 2:

Over your 4 years at USNA, what experiences have you had inside or outside the classroom that have had the most positive impact on your moral development and why?

Question 3:

Over your 4 years at USNA, what experiences have you had inside or outside the classroom that have had the least positive impact on your moral development and why?

Question 4:

Over your 4 years at USNA, are there any experiences that you have had inside or outside the classroom that you would consider as having a *negative* impact on your moral development and why?

Question 5:

Do you believe USNA does a good job of morally developing you? Why or why not?

Question 6:

Do you have anything else you would like to tell me?

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

LIST OF REFERENCES

Bergmann Drewe, S. (2000). Coaches, Ethics, and Autonomy [Electronic version]. In *Sport, Education & Society*. Vol. 5, Issue 2, pp. 147-162.

Bok, S. (1980). Whistleblowing and Professional Responsibilities. In D. Callahan & S. Bok (Eds.), *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education* (pp. 277-295). New York: Plenum Press.

Boss, J.A. (1994). The effect of community service work on the moral development of college ethics students. *Journal of Moral Education*. Vol. 23, pp. 183-198.

Bruggeman, E. & Hart, K. (1996). Cheating, lying, and moral reasoning by religious and secular high school students. *Journal of Educational Research*. 89, No. 6. pp. 340-344.

Burwell, R.M., Butman, R.E., & Van Wicklin, J. (1992). Values assessment at three consortium colleges: a longitudinal follow-up study (Houston, TX, Houghton College). *ERIC Document Reproduction Service*, ED 345 635.

Callahan, D. (1980). Goals in the teaching of ethics. In D. Callahan & S. Bok (Eds.), *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education* (pp. 61-80). New York: Plenum Press.

Department of Defense. (2003). *Military Education: Student and Faculty Perceptions of Student Life at the Military Academies*. (GAO Report GAO-03-1001). Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Accounting Office.

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and Education*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Kappa Delta Pi.

Donovan, A. (1999). Celestial Navigation, With a Moral Compass. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*. Vol. 5, Num. 3 pp. 285-298.

Edensor, T. (2002). *National identity, popular culture and everyday life*. Oxford: Berg.

Forney, T. A. (2000). *Four years together by the bay: a study of the midshipmen culture at the U.S. Naval Academy, 1946-76: volume 1*. (Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 2000).

Gelfand, H. M. (2002). *"Time, tide, and formation wait for no one": cultural and social change at the United States Naval Academy, 1949-2000*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, 2002).

Goffman, E. (1962). *Asylums: essays on the social situation of mental patients and other inmates*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing.

Haan, N. (1983).   An interactional morality of everyday life. In N. Haan et al. (Eds.), *Social Science as Moral Inquiry*. New York: New York University Press.

Hopton, J. (2002, June).   Validation of Male Violence or Solution to a Crisis of Masculinity. International Conference, Keele University 2002.

Jacobi, M. (1991).   Mentoring and Undergraduate Academic Success: A Literature Review. *Review of Educational Research*, 51, pp. 505-532.

Janowitz, M. (1971). *The Professional Soldier*. New York: The Free Press.

Jones, C. & McNamee, M.   (2000).   Moral Reasoning, Moral Action, and the Moral Atmosphere of Sport [Electronic version]. *Sport, Education & Society*. Vol. 5, Issue 2, p. 131.

King, P.M. & Kitchener, K.S. (1994). *Developing Reflective Judgement: understanding and promoting intellectual growth and critical thinking in adolescents and adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Kohlberg. L. (1984). *The psychology of moral development: the nature and validity of moral stages*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.

Kram, K.E. (1985). *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman & Co.

Kurtines, W. & Gewirtz J. (Eds.). (1995). *Moral Development: An Introduction*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Lawrence, J. (1980). Moral judgment intervention studies using the Devining Issues Test. In *Journal of Moral Education*, 9, 178-191.

Leming, J.S. (1996). Intrapersonal variations in stage of moral reasoning among adolescents as a function of situational context. In Bruggeman, E. & Hart, K. Cheating , lying and moral reasoning by religious and secular high school students. *Journal of Educational Research*. 89, No. 6. p. 340.

Lickona T. (1980). What does moral psychology have to say to the teacher of ethics? In D. Callahan & S. Bok (Eds.), *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education* (pp. 103-132). New York: Plenum Press.

Lind, G. (1996). *Educational environments Which Promote Self-Sustaining Moral Development*. Unpublished paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, April 8, 1996, p.2.

Mustapha, S.L. & Seybert, J.A. (1990). Moral reasoning in college students: effects of two general education curricula. *Educational Research Quarterly*. 14, pp. 32-40.

"Office of Superintendent, Letter Received 1845-1906." Annapolis: U.S. Naval Academy, Nimitz Library Special Collections and Archives Division, Box #1, Folder #9.

Perry, W.G. (1999). *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Piaget J. (1977). Moral judgment: Children invent the social contract. In H. Gruber & J. Voneche (Eds.), *The Essential Piaget* (p. 190), New York: Basic Books, Inc.

"Regulations Regarding Admission to the United States Naval Academy, 1845." Annapolis: U.S. Naval Academy, Nimitz Library Special Collections and Archives Division.

Rest, J. (1979). *Development in Judging Moral Issues*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

Rest, J. & Thoma S. (1985). Relationship of moral judgment development to formal education. *Developmental Psychology*. 21, pp. 709-714.

Rest, J. (1994). Background: Theory and research. In J. Rest & D. Narvaez (Eds.), *Moral Development in the Professions: Psychology and Applied Ethics* (p. 2). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Rest, J. in J. Boss. (1994). The Effect of Community Service Work on the Moral Development of College Ethics Students [Electronic version]. *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol. 23, Issue 2, p. 183.

Rest J. & Narvaez D. (1995). The four components of acting morally. In Kurtines W. & Gewirtz J. (Eds.). *Moral Development: An Introduction*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Rest J., Thoma S.J., & Edwards L. (1997). Designing and validating a measure of moral judgment: stage preference and stage consistency approaches. *Journal of Educational Psychology* 89 (1):5-28.

Rosen, B. (1980). The teaching of undergraduate ethics. In D. Callahan & S. Bok (Eds.), *Ethics Teaching in Higher Education* (pp. 171-189). New York: Plenum Press.

Ryan, R.J. (1999). *An Inductive Study of the Development, Application, and Sociological Impact of Ethics Instruction at the United Stated Naval Academy*. Masters Thesis. Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School.

Schlaefli, A., Rest, J.R., & Thoma, S.J. (1985). Does moral education improve moral judgment? A meta-analysis of intervention studies using the Defining Issues Test. In *Review of Educational Research*, 55, 319-352.

Shaver, D.G. (1985). A longitudinal study of moral development at a conservative, religious, liberal arts college. *Journal of College Student Personnel*. 26, pp. 400-404.

Shaver, D.G. (1987). Moral development of students attending a Christian liberal arts college and a Bible college. *Journal of College Student Personnel*. 28, pp. 211-218.

United States Naval Academy. (2003). Brigade Honor Programs. Retrieved October 16, 2003, from http://www.usna.edu/CharacterDevelopment/honor/honor_index.html

United States Naval Academy. (2003). Ethics and Character Development Assessment Process, Results of Phase I: Conceptual Overview. Unpublished manuscript, United States Naval Academy.

United States Naval Academy. (2004). Strategic Plan. Retrieved April 28, 2004 from http://www.usna.edu/StrategicPlan/docs/strategicplan.pdf

United States Naval Academy. (2004). United States Naval Academy Mission. Retrieved February 5, 2004 from http://www.usna.edu/about.htm

United States Naval Academy. (2004). The Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics. Retrieved March 25, 2004 from http://www.usna.edu/Ethics/Mission/mission.htm

"U.S.N.A. Board of Visitors Report," (12 April, 1973). Annapolis: U.S. Naval Academy, Nimitz Library Special Collections and Archives Division.

Tinto, V. (1975). Dropout from higher education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research. In Pascarella, E.T., & Terenzini, P.T., (Eds.), *How College Affects Students*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publisher.

Wilson, J. Q. (1993). *The Moral Sense*. New York: The Free Press.

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST

1.   Defense Technical Information Center
      Ft. Belvoir, Virginia

2.   Dudley Knox Library
      Naval Postgraduate School
      Monterey, California

3.   Nimitz Library
      U.S. Naval Academy
      Annapolis, Maryland

4.   Superintendent
      U.S. Naval Academy
      Annapolis, Maryland

5.   PRODEV/ Masters Program
      U.S. Naval Academy
      Annapolis, Maryland

6.   Dr. Albert C. Pierce
      Director, Center for the Study of Professional Military Ethics
      U.S. Naval Academy
      Annapolis, Maryland

7.   CAPT Dana P. French, Jr., USN (Ret.)
      Frederick, Maryland

8.   LT Timothy M. Clark
      Millersville, Maryland